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THE

Great Importance

OF A

RELIGIOUS LIFE,

And the

Continual Pleaſure thereof

CONSIDER'D.

To which are added ſome

Morning and Evening

PRAYERS.

The Third Edition with Additions.

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THE PREFACE.

THE *Deſign of the following Treatiſe, is to awaken in the Minds of unthinking Men a ſerious Senſe of Religion, and a true Concern for the Intereſt of their immortal Souls. This is an Undertaking ſo truly commendable in it's ſelf, and at this Time* ſo ſeaſonable and neceſſary, *that I hope I need make no Apology for attempting it, how unequal ſoever I may be for ſuch a Task.*

Whoever reflects with a due Concern upon that general Neglect of God and Religion, which has ſpread it ſelf throughout this Nation, and conſiders with what impatient Eagerneſs Men are bent upon purſuing their ſeveral Intereſts *in this World, (not to mention* the unnatural Heats and Animoſities *which are ſprung up among us, and which muſt unavoidably enervate the Force of true Religion, where they prevail) will eaſily be perſuaded to think, that all Endeavours poſſible ought to be uſed to call Men home to themſelves, and to remind them of conſidering what will be the Condition of their Souls in the next World.*

PREFACE.

And though I am not insensible, that what is here offered, has been with much greater Advantage inculcated in many of those excellent Discourses that are already extant; yet, when I consider how much good has been done by those small Tracts, *that have been Printed and Dispers'd of late Years, I am encourag'd to hope this little Treatise may be of some Service; at least among the meaner Sort, many of whom have not wherewithal to purchase larger Books.*

I have added some Prayers *at the End of this Book, not with an Intention to prescribe to any one, but to assist those that are not furnish'd with better Helps, as well knowing how* Important a Duty *Prayer is, and how highly necessary it is for every good Christian to be frequent in his* Addresses *at the Throne of Grace, if ever he expects the Favour and Love of God, and hopes* to find Grace to help in time of Need.

May God of his great Goodness give a Blessing to these weak Endeavours, and make them instrumental to his Glory, and the Good of Souls.

THE

THE GREAT IMPORTANCE OF A Religious LIFE.

CHAP. I.

WHAT *must I do to be sav'd?* said the *Goaler* to *Paul* and *Silas*, when he fell down before them, trembling and astonish'd at the mighty Power of God, which had open'd the Prison Doors in so miraculous a Manner; and to the same Effect, (though not with the same Sincerity) a certain *Lawyer* is said to have ask'd our Saviour, *What he must do to inherit Eternal Life*: But however different the Intentions of these two were, in making this Inquiry, 'tis certain, the Questions they ask'd were concerning a Matter of the last Im-

Acts 16. 30.

Luke 10. 25.

Importance, and what the Greateſt as well as the Meaneſt on Earth is nearly concern'd in: For, as Man conſiſts of two Parts, a *Soul* and *Body*, it is highly neceſſary for him to know what he muſt do, to ſecure the Happineſs of *both*; without this, he can never be compleatly happy; he may perhaps be able, by Diligence and Study, to improve in Arts and Sciences, to raiſe his Fortune, and to make himſelf conſiderable in the World; but for all this, he may be ſtill a miſerable and wretched Creature: For ſince *the Faſhion of this World paſſeth away*, and all the Glory and Splendor of it will in a ſhort time have an End, how deplorable muſt the Condition of that Man be, who has made no Proviſion for Eternity? who having an immortal Soul to take Care of, has ſpent all his Time and Pains in heaping up for the Body, and neglected that other and far better Part of himſelf, which is of infinite Worth and Value? *What ſhall it profit a Man*, ſaid our Bleſſed *Saviour, if he ſhall gain the whole World and loſe his own Soul!* What indeed! ſince Time bears no Proportion to Eternity; nor can the moſt exalted Pleaſures of this Life compenſate for endleſs Miſery and Torments: And therefore how wretched a Bargain does he make, who purchaſes any Happineſs in this World, at the hazard of his own Soul! Who, ſo he may but enjoy the Pleaſures of a Sin for a Seaſon, cares not what becomes of him hereafter!

Mat. 12. 26.

But

But perhaps ſome will object and ſay, Where is the Man ſo abandon'd to Folly and Madneſs, as to be content, for the ſake of a ſhort-liv'd Happineſs, to be Miſerable for ever afterwards? I wiſh indeed the Charge was wholly Groundleſs! but alas! there are too many that make this ſad Choice; not that any one chooſes Evil for Evil's ſake, or prefers Miſery before Happineſs, (for a Deſire of Happineſs is inſeparable from our Natures) but in the Scripture-Account of Things, he is ſaid to chooſe Deſtruction, who walks in the Broad Way that leads to it: For God has been pleas'd *to ſet before us Life and Death, Bleſſing and Curſing*; Rewards on the one hand, to encourage our Obedience; and Puniſhments on the other, to deter us from Sin: And as he that obeys the Commandments of God, chooſes *Life*; ſo he that tranſgreſſes them, chooſes *Death*; that Death which God has threatned to the Sinner, even Death Eternal; for *the Wages of Sin is Death*, and he that chooſes the one, (let his Pretenſions to Happineſs be what they will) muſt be ſaid to chooſe the other; becauſe he knows (at leaſt 'tis his own Fault if he does not) that God *will render to every Man according to his Deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing, ſeek for Glory and Honour and Immortality, Eternal Life; but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the Truth, but*

Deut 30. 19.

Rom. 26. 7, 8, 9.

but obey Unrighteouſneſs, Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguiſh upon every Soul of Man that doeth Evil.

I mention this, to ſhew what a wretched piece of Folly the Sinner is guilty of (how wiſe ſoever he may think himſelf, and how much he may deſpiſe the Sober Part of Mankind) when he firſt enters upon a Life of Wickedneſs; for he is then evidencing to all the World, that *Life* and *Death* being ſet before him, he has determined his Choice to the latter; a Choice ſo abſurd and unaccountable, that did not Experience convince us 'tis often made, we could hardly think it poſſible for a Rational Creature to be ſo blind. "O Bleſſed "God! Haſt thou ſet before us Happineſs and "Miſery, Joys unſpeakable and full of Glory "on the one hand, and Torments endleſs and "intolerable on the other; haſt thou given us "the Light of Reaſon to guide us, and ſuper-"added that of thy Holy Spirit to illuminate "and inſtruct us; haſt thou implanted in our "Natures a Dread and Averſion to Pain and "Miſery, and an inſatiable and never-ceaſing "Thirſt and Deſire after Happineſs; and "is it poſſible for us, after all this, to be "ſo blind and ſenſeleſs, ſuch Enemies to our "own Souls, and ſo regardleſs of their Eter-"nal Welfare, as to prefer the dark *Ways of* "*Sin* and Miſery, before thoſe bleſſed Paths "that lead to the bright Regions of Bliſs and "Glory? Alas! ſuch wretched Fools are too

"many

" many among us, who, notwithſtanding all
" that thou haſt done for us, will not hearken,
" will not be adviſed, but run headlong into
" the ways of Sin and Deſtruction.

This indeed is a melancholy Conſideration; and what ſhall we ſay to awaken Men out of this fatal Lethargy, and to inſpire them with a juſt Senſe of the great Danger they are in, but entreat them to conſider, that unleſs they repent they will certainly periſh? For *the Wrath of God is revealed againſt all Ungodlineſs and Unrighteouſneſs of Men; and though the times of Ignorance God winked at, yet now he commandeth all Men every where to repent; becauſe he hath appointed a Day, in the which he will judge the World in righteouſneſs by that Man whom he hath Ordained; whereof he hath given aſſurance unto all Men, in that he hath raiſed him from the Dead*—A Day when the Sinners *will* in vain *call to the Mountains and Rocks*, and ſay, *Fall on us, and hide us from the Face of him that ſitteth on the Throne, and from the Wrath of the Lamb: For the great Day of his Wrath is come, and who ſhall be able to ſtand?*— Who indeed ſhall be able to ſtand before the Face of an incens'd God, and hear that dreadful Sentence pronounc'd againſt him, *Depart from me, ye Curſed, into everlaſting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels?* —— *O! who can dwell with everlaſting Burnings?*

Acts 17. 30, 31.

Rev. 6.16, 17.

Theſe

These are things of infinite Moment and Concern, and are sufficient to shew us the great Necessity *of living righteously, soberly, and godly in this present World:* But because the weightiest Truths are too apt to be slightly passed over, I shall enlarge a little upon the great Importance of a Religious Life; and this I shall do, by endeavouring to shew these *Three* Things.

I. That there is no solid Happiness to be attain'd in this Life, but in the Practice of Religion.

II. That as Religion is the only Thing, that can make us happy while we live; so there is nothing but a good Life can give us any comfortable Prospect, when we come to dye.

III. That a conscientious Observance of the Duties of Religion, will not only make us live happily, and dye comfortably, but what is infinitely beyond this, will most certainly be rewarded with Eternal Happiness in the Life to come.

I. First then, I shall endeavour to shew, *That there is no solid Happiness to be attained in this Life, but in the Practice of Religion.*

It has been a great Artifice of the Devil, to possess the Minds of inconsidering Men with an Opinion, that Religion is a soure, morose, ill-

ill-natur'd Thing; that 'tis an Enemy to every thing which is pleaſant and chearful, and that whoever engages in the Practice of it, muſt, from that inſtant, renounce all the Pleaſures and Enjoyments of Life; (but as the *Devil is the Father of Lies*, 'tis no wonder that he ſets every thing before us in a falſe and deceitful Light: It was by this means he deceiv'd our firſt Unhappy Parents, and 'tis by the ſame Methods, that he now endeavours to betray their too credulous Poſterity: He is continually repreſenting *Evil as Good, and Good as Evil; putting Darkneſs for Light, and Light for Darkneſs*; and diſguiſing the Beauty and Comelineſs of Religion, by dreſſing it up in a deformed and ugly Dreſs; and too many (God knows) from ſuch falſe and unjuſt Repreſentations, are diſcourag'd from entring upon a Religious Courſe of Life.

But, would Men be perſuaded once to make the Experiment; would they forſake the hidden Paths of Darkneſs, and walk in the Ways that lead to Everlaſting Life, they would ſoon find how groſly they have been Cheated; they would quickly be convinc'd, that there is no Pleaſure like that of a good Conſcience, no real and ſolid Happineſs, but what reſults from the Practice of Virtue and Religion. They would then bleſs the happy Change they had made, and would not part with their Intereſt in God, for the greateſt Enjoyments this World could give them.

But

But here, it may be, it will be Objected, That ſome have made Trial of Religion, and yet have found no ſuch Satisfaction therein, as may be concluded from their returning again to their former Courſe of Life. 'Tis true indeed, there are ſome Inſtances (and ſad ones they are, God knows) of thoſe, who *after they have been once enlighten'd, and have taſted of the Heavenly Gift, and been made Partakers of the Holy Ghoſt, have yet fallen away*, and betook themſelves again to a Life of Sin and Folly; but this has not been owing to a Diſlike of Religion, but either to a want of Care, in not avoiding the Company which has formerly betray'd 'em, or elſe to a Forgetfulneſs, or at leaſt a Neglect of the Vows and Reſolutions they have made; or it may be, they have fallen under ſome violent Temptations, which they have not ſo vigorouſly reſiſted, as they might and ought to have done; and beſides, theſe Inſtances I hope are but rare: But then on the other hand, how many are there, who have forſaken the Company and Converſation of the Wicked, have lamented the Folly and Madneſs of their paſt Lives, and from the Slaves of Sin and Satan, become the Servants of God? Theſe will tell you from their own Experience, that they have found more true Peace and Satisfaction in one ſingle Act of Religion, than ever they met with in the moſt voluptuous and ſenſual Enjoyment; that all their paſt ſinful Pleaſures yield them now

now no other Fruits, but those bitter ones of Shame and Remorse; whereas in Religion they find such a Spring of Comfort continually refreshing their Souls, as they would not part with for all this World could possibly give them; which makes them Cry out with Holy *David*, That they *had rather be a Door-Keeper in the House of the Lord*, one of the meanest of God's Servants, *than dwell in Tents of Ungodliness*, amidst the Delights and Pleasures of sinful Men.

Indeed, for a Man to reflect upon the Actions of a well spent Life; to consider that he has made God his Friend, and has secur'd an Interest in his Favour, who is the Eternal Source and Fountain of all Good, infinite in Mercy and Loving-Kindness, as well as in Power; not only able, but willing and ready to help and assist him in all Difficulties; a Being to whom he may have Recourse under all Trials and Temptations, under the greatest Calamities and Troubles of Life; and to whom he may at all times with Confidence look up, as being assur'd that he has a powerful Intercessor in Heaven, *Jesus Christ* the Righteous, *in whom*, as the Apostle speaks, *we have redemption through his Blood, even the forgiveness of Sins*: And who *is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make Intercession for them*. I say, for a Man to consider these

Col. 1. 14.

Heb. 7. 25.

Things, to think that he is anſwering the End of his Creation; that he is doing the Work, for which God ſent him into the World; that he is become a *Member of Chriſt, a Child of God, and an Inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven*, muſt needs fill his Mind *with Joy unſpeakable and full of Glory*, with a Pleaſure and Satisfaction, that is ſolid and ſubſtantial, permanent and laſting, and which muſt infinitely exceed all thoſe Delights that ſenſual Men are ſo fond of.

1 Pet. 1. 8.

But then, on the other hand, for a wicked Man to conſider, That *the Face of the Lord is againſt them that do Evil*, and conſequently that he is of the Number of thoſe whom God hates and deſpiſes; that inſtead of *working out his Salvation with Fear and Trembling*, as the *Apoſtle* adviſes, he is daily *heaping up to himſelf Wrath againſt the Day of Wrath*; and though (it may be) he is now *cloathed with Purple and fine Linen, and fares ſumptuouſly every Day*; though he may at preſent live in all the Gaiety and Splendor, the Pomp and Luxury of a great Fortune, yet that there will come a Time, (and for ought he knows, it may not be many Moments off) when he ſhall be ſtript of all his Pleaſures and Enjoyments, and want even *a drop of Water to cool his Tongue*. Surely, ſuch Thoughts as theſe muſt ſtrike the Sinner through with Horror and Amaſement, and like *Belſhazzar*, when he ſaw *the Hand writing upon the Wall*,

Pſal. 34. 16.

wall, make him tremble, even in the midſt of his greateſt Mirth and Jollity.

And can a Man, with ſuch Thoughts about him, (and theſe, or ſomething like them will be ſure to haunt him) be ſaid to be happy? Are the Gripings of Conſcience, the Terrors of an angry Judge, and the Vengeance of the Almighty, ſuch Things as a Man can be pleas'd with? Alas! The Sinner may flatter himſelf as he pleaſes, and think to deceive others, by putting on an Air of Gaiety and Pleaſantneſs, but 'tis certain, he can never long be eaſy, while he carries about with him a faithful Monitor, that will be continually upbraiding him for his Folly and Madneſs, repreſenting before his Eyes the Dangers he is expos'd to, and croſſing him, as it were, in his Way, when he is in full Purſuit of his unlawful Pleaſures: And though he may be able perhaps ſometimes, to ſilence the Clamours of this troubleſome Companion by meer dint of Noiſe and Extravagance; yet when his Paſſions abate, (as they will not always bear to be upon the Stretch) and the Man grows cool, he will find the Upbraidings of his Mind return upon him like an Armed Man, and the Shame and Anguiſh, the Horror and Confuſion, that he will then feel, will infinitely overbalance all the Satisfactions he has found from his ſinful Pleaſures. I own indeed, this is not the Caſe of every Sinner; a Man by a long Courſe of Wickedneſs may arrive at ſuch an hardned State as to be Uncapable of any ſenſible Impreſſions;

preſſions; his Soul may be ſear'd, as it were, with an hot Iron, and may be fallen into ſuch a deep and fatal Lethargy, as nothing perhaps ſhall be able to awaken it, till it comes to feel the very Torments of the Damn'd: But will any one ſay, that this Man is happy, if we conſider him only in reſpect to this World, abſtracted from what will be his Lot hereafter? Are there no preſent Evils, beſides the Torments of a guilty Conſcience, that attend a wicked Life? Are not Pains and Aches, Rottenneſs and Diſeaſes the natural Effects of Luſt and Intemperance; Poverty and Rags, of Pride and Luxury? Does not Paſſion, and Anger, and Revenge, expoſe ſome Men to Fightings and Quarrels? Robbery, Theft and Murder bring upon others a ſhameful and untimely End. How many Evils are there in the World, that are the immediate Effects of Mens Vices, not only what befal ſome particular Perſons and Families, but even whole Kingdoms: *From whence come Wars and Fightings among you,* ſays St. *James, come* Jam. 4. 1. *they not hence, even of your Luſts, that war in your Members?* And the ſame may be ſaid as to many of the Miſeries and Calamities that ſome Men labour under; from whence come they, but from their Luſts and Paſſions? And in truth how can it be otherwiſe, if we conſider what *Solomon* Prov. 3. 33. ſays, *that the Curſe of the Lord is in* Chap. 13. 21. *the Houſe of the Wicked,* and *that Evil purſueth Sinners.* How can any

any thing but Misery attend him, that has God for his Enemy, and is curſed of him?

Let us now Conſider, What is the Lot and Portion of good Men in this World, and whether the Practice of Religion and Virtue is not the moſt likely Way that a Man can take to make himſelf happy here as well as hereafter? *Solomon* had as much Experience of the Pleaſures of the World as ever Man had, and tried as many Ways to make himſelf happy as his Heart could well deviſe; having, as he ſays of himſelf, *kept nothing from his Eyes that they deſired, nor with-held his Heart from any Joy*; and yet, when he came to caſt up the Account, he found this to be the Sum of it, That *all was Vanity and Vexation of Spirit*: And therefore, when he was to inſtruct his Son in the Ways of true Happineſs, he adviſes him to get *Wiſdom and Underſtanding*; for *Wiſdom*, ſays he, *is the principal thing, therefore get Wiſdom; and with all thy getting get Underſtanding*; and as an Encouragement ſo to do, he tells him in another Place, that *Happy is the Man that findeth wiſdom, and the Man that getteth underſtanding: For the merchandize of it is better than the merchandize of Silver, and the gain thereof than fine Gold. She is more precious than rubies, and all the things thou canſt deſire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days,* Eccleſ. 2. 10. Prov. 4. 5, 7. Chap. 3. v. 13. &c.

are in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour; her ways are ways of pleasantneſs, and all her paths are peace. And what this Wiſdom and Underſtanding is, *Solomon* tells us in another Place: *The fear of the Lord,* ſays he, *is the beginning of wiſdom, and the knowledge of the holy is underſtanding.* Or, as it is in *Job, Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wiſdom; and to depart from evil is underſtanding.*

Chap. 9. ver. 10.

Job. 28. 28.

Here then is the Excellency of Religion, that it not only ſecures to us a Reverſion of endleſs Happineſs, but makes our Lives at preſent eaſy and delightful; the very Ways of Religion are pleaſant, as well as the End. 'Tis true indeed, Vice has its preſent Pleaſures as well as Virtue; but then there is this Difference between them, that Sin, though it may yield a preſent Satisfaction to a carnal Mind, yet it leaves a deadly Sting behind it; ſo that all its Pleaſures are dearly accounted for, ſince they are purchaſed at the Expence of a deal of ſucceeding Trouble, Shame, and Self-condemnation: Whereas in Religion we find it quite otherwiſe; the Pleaſures that ariſe from thence are not only great, but laſting; they leave no unſavory Reliſh upon the Mind, no Loathings and Diſlike, nor are attended with thoſe Allays that always accompany ſinful Gratifications. "We may talk of Pleaſures and

Ar. Bp. of York *in his Volume of Sermons,* p. 501.

"En-

"Enjoyments, ſays a *Great Man* of our "Church, but no Man ever truly found "them, till he became acquainted with "God, and was made ſenſible of his Love, "and Partaker of his Spiritual Favours, and "lived in an entire Friendſhip and Commu-"nion with him." —— No certainly, Religion is the only Happineſs of a Rational Creature, the only Thing that gives us any true and real Satisfaction, all other Pleaſures are, at beſt but ſhort and tranſitory, but in this we find a Delight and Satisfaction which is ſolid, ſubſtantial, and laſting; *a good Conſcience is a continual Feaſt*, a never-ceaſing Spring of Joy and Comfort; it makes the Heart merry, and the Countenance glad, and chears and refreſhes the Soul under the greateſt Troubles and Calamities of Life: He that is poſſeſs'd of this inеſtimable Jewel, has a Treaſure greater than all the Riches of the *Indies*, a Treaſure, which neither the Malice of Devils nor evil Men can rob him of; and ſo long as he retains that, (as he may always do, unleſs he is wretchedly wanting to himſelf) he can never be truly miſerable. For as a good Conſcience gives a Reliſh to all our outward Enjoyments, ſo it abates and takes off the Edge of the ſharpeſt Afflictions; and not only enables a Man to bear up under preſent Evils, but fortifies him againſt the Dread and Apprehenſion of future ones; it arms a Man with Courage and Reſolution, and gives him ſuch a Firmneſs and Preſence

ſence of Mind, as makes him able to endure the greateſt Shock. The Holy *Pſalmiſt* tells us, That a good Man *ſhall not be afraid of any evil tidings, for his heart ſtandeth faſt, and believeth in the Lord.* Yea, *though I walk,* ſays he, *through the valley of the ſhadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy rod and thy ſtaff comfort me.*——What ſhould he fear, whoſe Soul is anchor'd upon the Rock of Ages? He knows, that he is in the Hands of God, who is a kind and merciful Father, and is aſſured, that *all things ſhall work together for good to them that love him*; and therefore he can rejoice in God, even in the midſt of Trouble and Affliction, when he conſiders, that his *Afflictions are but for a moment, and that,* if he makes a right Uſe of them, *they will work for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*

Pſal. 112. 7.

Pſal. 23. 24.

2 Cor. 4. 17.

See then the Folly and Madneſs of thoſe, *that take not God for their ſtrength, but truſt to the multitude of their riches, and ſtrengthen themſelves in their wickedneſs,* and think by theſe Means to ſecure themſelves from the Evils of this Life.—— Alas! There are numberleſs Calamities, from which Wealth and Power can never ſhelter us; and therefore when a Man lets go his Truſt and Confidence in God, and takes Sanctuary in the Strength

Pſal. 52. 8.

Strength of his Wickedneſs, he will find himſelf miſerably miſtaken; for he will ſoon perceive, that the Weight of Sin, ſuperadded to that of Temporal Evils, is a Burden greater than he is able to bear. —— No; there is nothing can alleviate the Force of worldly Troubles, but a good Life; That makes a Man look up with Confidence to God, and gives him a near Proſpect of that Place, where *there is fulneſs of joy, and pleaſures for evermore*; And this, though it will not remove the Afflictions which God is ſometimes pleas'd for wiſe and good Ends to ſend upon good Men in this Life, yet it will mightily leſſen and enervate the Force of them; for how ſtrong a Conſolation muſt it be for a good Man, under Bodily Grief and Pains, to contemplate a State, whereunto he is haſt'ning, where there ſhall be *no more Sorrow, no more Pain, and where all Tears ſhall* for ever *be wiped from his Eyes!* Or if he is under the Preſſures of Want and Neceſſity, how muſt it ſupport and relieve his ſinking Spirits to conſider, that he has a Father in Heaven, who *will never leave him nor forſake him,* however he may think fit to deprive him of outward Comforts; and that there is no Perſon in the World ſo great, ſo proſperous, ſo happy but that (having a little Patience) he himſelf ſhall be more ſo! Heb. 13. 5.

I have hitherto conſider'd a good Life, *Firſt*, as it fills our Minds with Joy, and Peace, and Comfort, and delivers us from thoſe uneaſy

Thoughts

Thoughts and Reflections, which haunt and torment the Sinner: And, *Secondly*, as it is a Means to ſecure us from thoſe Evils, which are the immediate Effects of Sin and Wickedneſs, and to ſupport us under ſuch Afflictions, as it pleaſes God many times to ſend upon good Men in this World. I ſhall now conſider it with reſpect to ſome other Advantages it has above that of a wicked one; whereby, I hope, it will fully appear, that there is nothing ſo likely to ſecure a Man's Happineſs in this World, as a ſtrict Obſervance of the Precepts and Duties of Religion.

St. *Peter* lays it down as an undoubted Truth, that the Practice of Religion is the only Foundation of Happineſs in this Life: *He that will love Life*, ſays he, *and ſee good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they ſpeak no guile; let him eſchew evil and do good.* And to the ſame Effect ſays the Holy *Pſalmiſt* in the 34th *Pſalm*; the Reaſon of which is given by them both, almoſt in the very ſame Words; *For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers; but the face of the Lord is againſt them that do evil.* Indeed from that whole *Pſalm*, as well as many others, it is evident, that the Providence of God does very much intereſt itſelf in the Care and Support of good Men in this World; and

1 Pet. 3. 10, 11.

Pſal. 34. 12, &c.

1 Pet. 3. 12.

Pſal. 3. 15. 16.

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So the Holy *Psalmist* tells us, in another Place, he had found it from his own Observation; *I have been young*, says he, *and now am old, and yet saw I never the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread.* Psal. 37. 25. As on the contrary; *I have seen*, says he, *the ungodly in great power, and flourishing like a green Bay-tree: I went by, and lo! he was gone; I sought him, but his place could no where be found.* ver. 36, 37. The very Memory of him it seems was extinct and gone.

It is certain, that God is a Being of infinite Purity and Holiness; and as he must therefore hate Iniquity with the utmost Hatred; so there is no doubt, but a serious and conscientious Observance of the Duties of Religion will recommend a Man to his Favour and Kindness; and though I will not say, that never any wicked Man has prosper'd, nor any good Man been reduc'd to Straits and Difficulties in this World, yet, since the Scripture assures us, That *Godliness has the promise of the life, that now is*, as well as *of that which is to come*; I think we may certainly conclude, That the Practice of Religion is the most likely way a Man can take to thrive and prosper in the World, and to make his Life comfortable and happy. 1 Tim 4. 8.

Indeed, had the Scriptures been silent in this Matter, yet the Reason and Nature of Things would have taught us this Truth: For, let any

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one conſider and tell me, whether he that is juſt and true in all his Dealings, honeſt and ſincere in all his Profeſſions, and faithful to his Word and Promiſes; that is diligent and induſtrious in his Calling, makes it his conſtant Rule to do to all Men as he would they ſhould do to him, and is ſo far from endeavouring to over-reach and defraud his Neighbour, that he flies from every Appearance of ſuch Evils, and had rather forego the greateſt Gain, than purchaſe it at the Expence of the leaſt Injuſtice: I ſay, let any one tell me, whether it is not much more probable, that ſuch a one ſhould enlarge his Fortune in the World, than he that acts the very Reverſe of all this; that practiſes all the Arts of Cheating and Lying, of Over-reaching and Circumvention, and ſtoops to every thing, how baſe and diſhoneſt ſo ever which he thinks will turn to his preſent Profit; that conſiders not ſo much, how honeſt and upright his Actions are, as how profitable; and cares not what his Neighbour ſuffers by his Injuſtice, ſo he himſelf does but get by it? Such a one, when he comes to be known, (as he will not be able long to conceal himſelf) will certainly loſe his Credit and Reputation; he will become hated and deſpiſed, and every one will be afraid to have any Dealings with him: Whilſt, on the other hand, the honeſt and upright Man (beſides the Bleſſing of God, which he cannot fail of) will be ſure to meet with the Love and Eſteem of all

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that know him; he will have few, if any, Enemies, but many Friends, and those some of the wisest and best of Men, who will be always ready to help and assist him, and be glad of every Opportunity of promoting his Interest and Happiness.

2. Another great Blessing of Life, and what gives a Relish to all our other Enjoyments, is Health; and who is more likely to obtain this, than the Religious Man? For will not Temperance, Sobriety and Virtue, (Duties which he practises) conduce more to a sound and vigorous Constitution of Body, than Surfeiting and Drunkenness, Lust and Intemperance; the mischievous Effects of which are too visible to be deny'd? What Sickness and Diseases have some brought upon themselves meerly by their Excess and Debaucheries; Diseases, which have not terminated with their own Lives, but have been entail'd upon their unhappy Posterity? It is impossible it should be otherwise, unless it should please God to change the Nature of Things; for if Men will run into those Excesses, which inflame and corrupt their Blood, 'tis no wonder if a Fever or Dropsy, or some more fatal Distemper proceeds from such a Disorder; and when a vicious and debauch'd Parent has brought Rottenness into his own Bones, though the Children may be free from the Vices of their Father, yet they many times feel the mischievous Effects of his Transgressions all their Lives.

3. Again, a chearful and contented Mind is another great Bleſſing of Life, for without it nothing in this World can make us happy; and where ſhall a Man obtain this, but in the Practice of Religion; that will teach him to reſign his Will to God, to ſubmit to all the Diſpenſations of his Providence, and to be patient and eaſy, chearful and ſatisfy'd under every Diſappointment and Trouble he meets with; as knowing, that God is the ſovereign Diſpoſer of all Things; a Being of infinite Goodneſs, Kindneſs and Love; one that *does not willingly afflict the Children of Men*, but makes *every thing work together for good to them that love him.* And how quiet, eaſy, and contented muſt ſuch a Man be under all events? He has learn'd with St. *Paul*, *how to abound*, *and how to want*, and as he is not puft up with the one, ſo neither is he caſt down, when it pleaſes God to ſend the other; but goes through the World with a chearful, even, and contented Mind, free from all that Inquietude, Impatience and Diſcontent, which a proud, envious, and ambitious Man is ſeldom, if ever, free from.

4. Peace is another great Bleſſing, highly conducing to the Happineſs of Life, and this is what the Religious Man has the juſteſt Claim to; he conſiders, that *if God ſo lov'd us, (as to ſend his Son to be the propitiation for our Sins,) we ought alſo to love one another*; and therefore he is an Enemy to no Man, but kind and oblig-

1 John 4. 10, 11.

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ing to all; and if any one is so unreasonable, as to reward him *evil for good*, (as the *Psalmist* complains some had done to him) yet in Imitation of his blessed Saviour, (whose Example he continually sets before him) *he does Good to them that hate him, and prays for them that despightfully use him and persecute him. When he is reviled, he reviles not again, when he suffers he threatens not, but committeth himself to him that judgeth Righteously.* Mat. 5.44. 1 Pet. 2. 23. He resolves, as St. *Paul* advises, *to put away all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, with all Malice*; and endeavours after the Attainment of that *Wisdom*, which is *from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be intreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits.* Eph. 4 31. Jam. 3.17. And this Principle of Love and Charity, as it renders the Mind quiet and easy, calm and compos'd, so it makes a Man, not only happy himself, but a Blessing and Comfort to all about him; and consequently attracts the Love and Esteem and Admiration of those, that see and feel the kind and benign Influences of so Divine a Temper. But now, on the other hand, the Life of an angry and revengeful Man is all over Storm and Tempest; he is a Stranger to Peace, and to all the blessed Fruits and Effects of it, (for where *envying and Strife is*, as the *Apostle* speaks, *there is Confusion and every evil Work*) Jam. 3.16.

his Mind is continually reſtleſs and uneaſy, agitated to and fro with the violent Force of unruly Paſſions, which lead him on from one Evil to another, and hurry him many times into thoſe that are of a very miſchievous Conſequence. And what Miſery and Torment muſt a Man feel, who is poſſeſs'd with a Spirit ſo directly contrary to that of the Goſpel? How little can he taſte of the true Happineſs of Life, whoſe Mind is always diſordered and out of Tune? He may perhaps poſſeſs a great deal of the World, but can enjoy very little of it; for what Comfort can he find from any thing in this World, who has no Peace in his own Mind; who is at Enmity with himſelf, and with almoſt every one elſe, and is capable of being put out of Humour by every trifling croſs Accident? Is it poſſible for a Man of ſuch a Temper to be Happy, even in the midſt of the greateſt Enjoyments? No certainly; 'tis the Meek-ſpirited that our *Saviour* has pronounc'd *Bleſſed*, and they only *ſhall inherit the Earth*; they *ſhall be refreſhed*, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks, *in the Multitude of Peace*, and ſhall find a real Comfort in whatever they have; which (though it ſhould happen to be but little) yet being enjoy'd in Peace and Quiet, and with a contented Mind, will undoubtedly yield them a much greater and truer Satisfaction, than a Man of a contrary Diſpoſition can reap from large Poſſeſſions and ample Revenues.

Mat. 5. 5. Pſal. 37. 11.

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5. I ſhall mention but one Advantage more, which a good Man has above a wicked one, as to this World, and that is in reſpect of dutiful and obedient Children; which is allow'd by all to be a great Bleſſing in it ſelf, and is what, I think, the former has much greater Reaſon to expect and hope for, than the latter; for if it pleaſes God to bleſs a good Man with Children, he begins very early to inſtil into their tender Minds the Principles of Virtue and Religion; he teaches them *to remember their Creator in the Days of their Youth*, and brings them up in the Fear and Admonition of the Lord; he ſets before them the Example of a Holy and Religious Life, and endeavours to wean them from the Pride and Vanity of the World, and from all thoſe hurtful Luſts and Paſſions, which tend only to make them Miſerable both here and hereafter; he inſtructs them in that Knowledge, which is uſeful and profitable, which will give them a right Underſtanding of themſelves and of their Duty, and make them wiſe unto Salvation; and when the Grace of God co-operates with theſe Endeavours, (as it will not fail to do) what comfortable Hopes may not ſuch a Parent entertain of reaping the happy Fruits of all his Labours? Inſtead of looking upon his Children with Grief and Trouble, and having his Grey Hairs, by their Means, brought down with Sorrow to the Grave; how much rather may he expect to behold them with Pleaſure

and Delight, when he ſees them as ſo many *Olive-Branches round about his Table*, Fruitful in every good Work, and increaſing in the Knowledge and Love of God?

There is no one, I believe, but will allow, that this is the moſt likely Way a Man can take to be happy in his Children; and though it ſhould happen not to prove effectual, (for Succeſs is not in our own Power) yet this he may be ſure of that his pious and ſincere Endeavours to train up his Children in a ſober, honeſt, and religious Manner, will certainly recommend him to the Favour and Love of God, as is manifeſt from the great Regard God expreſs'd for *Abraham*, on this very Account, *And the Lord ſaid, ſhall I hide from* Abraham *that thing which I do; ſeeing that* Abraham *ſhall ſurely become a great and mighty Nation, and all the Nations of the Earth ſhall be bleſſed in him? For I know him, that he will command his Children and his Houſhold after him, and they ſhall keep the Way of the Lord, to do Juſtice and Judgment, that the Lord may bring upon* Abraham *that which he hath ſpoken of him.*

Gen. 18. 17,18,19.

This is a great Encouragement to Parents, to be very careful in the Education of their Children; they are making Proviſion for their own Happineſs, at the ſame Time they are endeavouring to ſecure that of their Children; they are laying up in Store a good Foundation againſt

againſt the Day of Trouble, if it ſhould ever come upon them, I mean, if it ſhould pleaſe God, that they ſhould live to ſee their Children wicked and miſerable, notwithſtanding all the Endeavours they have us'd to make them otherwiſe; they will then have the Comfort to conſider, that they are clear from the Guilt of their Childrens Sins; they will then be free from thoſe bitter Reflections that a wicked Man muſt make, who ſees his Children ruin'd and undone by thoſe Vices and Follies, which his Example has taught them, or his Careleſneſs and Neglect ſuffered them to fall into; —— bitter Reflections, I ſay, to be ſure they muſt be, that ſuch a one will make, when he conſiders, that he has his Childrens Sins as well as his own to account for, and applies to himſelf (as he may juſtly do) thoſe dreadful Words, which God ſpake to the Prophet *Ezekiel*, *When I ſay unto the Wicked, thou ſhalt ſurely dye, and thou giveſt him not warning, nor ſpeakeſt to warn the wicked from his wicked way to ſave his Life: The ſame wicked Man ſhall dye in his Iniquity; but his Blood will I require at thy Hands.* —— Ezek. 3. 18.

O terrible Words of moſt juſt Judgment! How dreadful muſt they ſound in the Ears of a wicked Parent, whoſe Children have periſhed through his Fault!

I have now conſidered ſome of thoſe Duties which Religion obliges us to, and endeavour'd

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to ſhew how conducive they are to our Temporal Happineſs; by which I hope it ſufficiently appears, how much good Men have the Advantage of the wicked, even as to this World. And here I cannot but take Notice of the wonderful Love of God to Mankind, in that to encourage our Obedience to his Laws, he has annex'd a preſent as well as future Reward to a good Life, and has ſo interwoven our Duty and Happineſs together, that while we are diſcharging our Obligations to the one, we are at the ſame Time making Proviſion for the other.

How much then do they derogate from the Honour of God, who repreſent Religion as an unprofitable and unpleaſant Task! When 'tis plain to any Man, that conſiders things rightly, and is not under the Prejudice of his Luſts and Paſſions, that the great Deſign of Religion is to make us happy here as well as hereafter; and would all Men live up to the Rules and Precepts of it, we ſhould find this World a kind of Heaven upon Earth.

Had the Practice of our Duty been never ſo irkſom and uneaſy, and had nothing but Trouble and Miſery been the Lot of good Men in this World, yet when we conſider, that this Life will ſhortly have an End, and that there is an *Eternal weight of Glory* reſerv'd in Heaven for thoſe that truly love and ſerve God; what wiſe Man but would prefer the rugged Paths of Virtue and Religion, which he knows will

ſhortly

ſhortly lead him into an Eternity of Bliſs and Happineſs, before the ways of Sin and Wickedneſs, (how pleaſant ſoever he might find them) where he is in Danger every Moment of falling into the Pit of Deſtruction, and which, he is ſure, will in a little Time bring him into a Place of endleſs Miſery and Torment!

But, as this is not the Caſe; ſince there is nothing in Religion, but what tends to make our Lives eaſy, chearful and contented; nothing but what is ſuitable to our Natures, and agreeable to the Dictates of right Reaſon; nothing, but what will ennoble our Minds, enlarge our Underſtandings, and inſpire us with a generous Principle of univerſal Love, and Charity, and good Will to Mankind; in ſhort, ſince *the Commands of God are not grievous*; but his *Yoke is eaſy, and his Burden light*, it manifeſtly follows, that as a good Life is the higheſt Wiſdom; ſo a wicked one is the Extremity of Folly and Madneſs.

THE

THE GREAT IMPORTANCE OF A Religious LIFE.

CHAP. II.

IN the foregoing Chapter, I have endeavoured to ſhew, that Virtue and Religion is the only ſolid Foundation of Happineſs in this World; the only Thing that can make us paſs the Time of our Pilgrimage here on Earth with any tolerable Eaſe and Comfort: I ſhall now proceed, in the next Place, to conſider the great Advantage of a good Life, from that comfortable Proſpect it gives us when we come to Dye.

And this is an Advantage peculiar to Virtue and Religion, and what a Life of Sin and Wickedneſs never pretended to; the moſt, which that promiſes its Votaries, is to regale their

their Senſes for a while; it gives them no Hopes beyond the Grave, nor aims at any thing farther than a ſhort-liv'd Happineſs; whereas Religion diſcovers to us a Scene of endleſs Bliſs and Joy; and while it teaches us to remember, that *we have no abiding City here*, and that *it is appointed for all Men once to dye*; it does, at the ſame time, give us a Proſpect of that Heavenly *Jeruſalem*, where the Righteous ſhall ſhine as the Stars in the Firmament, and ſhall live for ever in the Preſence of God; *in that fulneſs of Joy*, which is *at his right hand for evermore*.

It muſt indeed be own'd, that Death is the great King of Terrors; that the Diſſolution of Soul and Body, and the Thoughts of becoming a Prey to the devouring Worms, carries in it ſomething very ſhocking to Human Nature; yet to a good Man, Death appears in a quite different View; he Conſiders, that to leave this World, is only to quit a Place of Trouble and Vexation, of Vanity and Emptineſs; it is to leave *a barren and dry Wilderneſs, where no Water is*, for the delightful Regions of Bliſs and Happineſs, where there are Rivers of Pleaſures, and a never-ceaſing Spring of endleſs Comfort: He Conſiders, I ſay, that *though his earthly Tabernacle is diſſolved, yet he has a building of God, a Houſe not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens*, He is aſſur'd with

2 Cor. 5. 1.

with *Job, that his Redeemer liveth,*
Job. 19. 25, 26, 27. *and that he ſhall ſtand at the latter day upon Earth; and though after his skin, Worms deſtroy his Body, yet in his fleſh he ſhall ſee God, whom he ſhall ſee for himſelf, and his Eyes ſhall behold him and not another.*

This is what Religion promiſes to them *who by patient continuance in well doing, ſeek for Glory and Honour and Immortality*; and it is the Hopes and Expectations of this, that fortifies the Mind of a good Chriſtian, and gives him a Courage and Reſolution, which even Death it ſelf ſhall not be able to ſhake.

It was this that gave Holy *David* ſuch a Firmneſs of Mind, as made him ſay,
Pſal. 23. 4. *Though I walk through the Valley of the ſhadow of Death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me, thy Rod and thy Staff they comfort me.* He had made God his Portion, his Hope and his Truſt: *The Lord,* ſays he, *is my ſtoney Rock,*
Pſal. 18. 1. *and my Defence, my Saviour, my God, and my Might, in whom I will truſt, my Buckler, the Horn alſo of my Salvation.* And though we find him ſometimes complaining, *that the Sorrows of Death had compaſſed him, and the Overflowings of Ungodlineſs made him afraid; that the Pains of Hell came about him, and the Snares of Death overtook him*; yet the great Confidence he had in the Goodneſs and Love of God, and the firm

firm Belief of a better Life after this, overcame all his Fears. *I had fainted,* says he, *but that I verily believe, to see the Goodness of the Lord in the Land of the Living.* Psal. 27. 13.

Religion has been the Support of good Men in all Ages; it is certain, whoever leans upon any thing else, will find, that he trusts to a broken Reed, which will sink under him; there is nothing (as I have observ'd in the former Chapter) but the Testimony of a good Conscience, and the Hopes of the Favour and Love of God, that is able to bear a Man up under the Weight and Pressure of any great Calamity; much less will any thing else be sufficient at the Hour of Death: For then we shall be stript of all the Pleasures and Enjoyments of this World, of all those things, wherein we are now apt to place so great a Confidence; and unless we are fortify'd *with the Shield of Faith, and the Breast-plate of Righteousness*; unless we have *put on the Lord Jesus*, and are Cloathed with the Robes of Righteousness, we shall be left naked and defenceless, to encounter Death with all its Terrors: The Sinner, however he may now *trust in the Multitude of his Riches, and strengthen himself in his Wickedness*, must then let go all his Dependencies, and descend into the Regions of Darkness without Hope, and (what is yet more Terrible) with dreadful Expectations. Of what infinite Moment

and Importance is it then to us all, ſo to live, that *when the time appointed for our great Change ſhall come*, we may meet Death without Fear and Aſtoniſhment, and with an humble Confidence may look up to God, in an aſſured Hope of his Mercy in Chriſt Jeſus!

A good Life is the ſure Pledge of a happy Death; as it fills our Minds with Joy and Satisfaction, while we live, far ſurpaſſing all the Pleaſures of Senſual Enjoyments; ſo, when we come to dye, it gives us that *Peace of God, which paſſeth all Underſtanding*. When a Man in his laſt Hour, can look back upon a Life well ſpent, and with King *Hezekiah* can ſay, Iſa. 38. 3. *Remember now, O Lord, I beſeech thee, how I have walked before thee, in Truth, and with a perfect Heart, and have done that which is good in thy Sight*, what an unſpeakable Satisfaction muſt it be to him? How mild and calm will Death then appear, and with how little Concern will he receive its Summons! With what Chearfulneſs will he then take Leave of this World, and all that was dear to him in it, and how contentedly will he quit his earthly Tabernacle, when he conſiders, that he's to exchange it for *a Building of God, a Houſe not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens!* I ſay, what an unſpeakable Comfort muſt it be to a Dying Man, when he is entring into *the Valley of the Shadow of Death*, to have before him a bright Proſpect of Life and Glory; to find the Light of God's Counte-

Countenance ſhining upon his Mind, and the Comforts of his holy Spirit chearing and refreſhing his Soul; to look up to God with an humble Confidence, and with a well grounded Hope of his Mercy in Chriſt Jeſus, to reſign his Soul into his Maker's Hands, nothing doubting, but that his heavenly Father, whom he has faithfully ſerv'd in this World, will take Care of him and reward him in the next! O! How far more happy muſt the Death of ſuch a one be, than the moſt envied State of the greateſt Mortal? Who would not wiſh with *Balaam to dye the Death of the Righteous, and that his laſt End might be like his?* Eſpecially,

If we conſider in the next Place, the miſerable Condition of a wicked Man, when he comes to Dye: But how ſhall I deſcribe the Agonies and Convulſions of Mind, that a deſpairing Sinner labours under in his laſt Hour! Who can expreſs the Thouſandth Part of the Anguiſh and Torment that he feels, who is under the Terrors of Death and Damnation! *The Spirit of a Man*, ſays *Solomon*, *can bear its Infirmities, but a wounded Spirit who can bear?* The moſt exquiſite Pains and Torments of the Body, are nothing comparable to what a dying Sinner feels, from the Laſhes of his guilty Conſcience: With what Shame and Confuſion does he then look back upon the Actions of his paſt Life! How does he tremble, and ſtand amaz'd at the Sight of thoſe Sins, which were once the darling Object of his guilty Deſires; and what

an horrible Dread overwhelms his Mind, when he Conſiders, that he is entring upon that unchangeable State, from which he knows there is no Redemption; that he is going to give an Account of a Life, which he cannot think upon without Horror and Aſtoniſhment, and for which he is juſtly afraid he ſhall be condemn'd to endleſs Miſery and Torments! How does he condemn himſelf, when he conſiders, that he has ſpent that Time wickedly and inſignificantly, which was given him for noble and excellent Purpoſes; that he has neglected the great and important Work of his Salvation, and inſtead of ſecuring to himſelf an Intereſt in the Love and Favour of God, by a Life of Virtue and Religion, has liv'd in a direct Contradiction to his Will, in the Defiance of his Laws, and in heaping up to himſelf a huge Load of Guilt, which he now finds ready to cruſh him with its intolerable Weight!

But let us ſuppoſe the Life of a dying Perſon not to have been ſo flagrant and vicious, as to fill his Mind with ſuch black and deſpairing Thoughts; yet, if upon the Review of it in his laſt Hour, he finds in it ſuch a Mixture of Good and Evil, that he is in great Doubts and Perplexities concerning his eternal Welfare, how ſad and diſconſolate muſt his Condition be, and what a dreadful Concern will he then be under, when he conſiders, that he is leaving this World, and going he knows not whither; that he is juſt launching out into the boundleſs Ocean of Eternity,

nity, and knows not, but the Moment he does so, his Vessel may be torn and Shipwrackt, and be for ever driven to and fro upon the raging Waves of Fire and Brimstone! It is, without all Question, a most uncomfortable Thing, to be doubtful of a Matter, of which it so nearly concerns us to have some reasonable Assurance.

O! that Men would be perswaded seriously to think of these Things; that they would *be wise, and consider their latter End,* and as the *Psalmist* advises, would *keep Innocency, and take heed to the thing that is right,* for that, and that only, *shall bring a Man Peace at the last.* It is certain, however some may flatter themselves, there is no leaving this World with any tolerable Comfort, unless our Lives have been such, as through the Mercy of God, and the Merits of Christ Jesus, we may reasonably hope, that we are of the Number of those whom our great Judge shall at the last Day pronounce *Blessed:* But now, how can any one, whose Life has been a direct Contradiction to the Will of God, entertain such Hopes! For though he should perhaps, when he sees Death approaching, lament and bewail the Folly of his past Life, and with strong Crying and Tears resolve upon a new Course of Life, if it should please God to spare him; yet since the Gospel has no where assur'd us, that God will accept of a Death Bed Repentance, or be reconcil'd to a Sinner, who, after he has lived a wicked

Deut. 32. 29.

Psal. 37. 38.

and careleſs Life, and been deaf to all the Calls and Invitations of the Holy Spirit, the Threatnings of the Goſpel, and the Checks of his own Conſcience, ſhall at the laſt, when he is able to gratify his Luſts no longer, and begins to fear the ſad Demerit of his Sins, Cry out for Mercy, and wiſh, that he had been Wiſe in Time; I ſay, ſince God has no where reveal'd it to us, that he will accept of any Repentance which is not followed with a ſincere Obedience; and ſince it is impoſſible for a dying Sinner to bring forth ſuch Fruits of Repentance, how uncomfortable muſt the Hopes be that are built upon ſo uncertain a Foundation!

'Tis true indeed, this is all that a Sinner can do when he comes to dye; and it would be well for his own ſake, and for the ſake of his ſorrowful Friends and Relations, that he would do thus much, and not go out of the World hardned and unrepenting; (for who knows how far infinite Mercy may be extended?) But, ſurely, it muſt be allow'd to be the higheſt Pitch of Folly and Madneſs, to venture a Matter of ſuch vaſt Importance upon ſo uncertain an Iſſue; upon a few broken, confuſed, and almoſt deſpairing Sighs and Groans; for if the dying Agonies and Horrours, the ſolemn Vows and Reſolutions of ſuch Men ſhould not prove a true godly Sorrow, *a Repentance to Salvation not to be repented of*, (as no Man living can ſay they certainly will) they are loſt and undone to all Eternity.

But

But ſuppoſe we could be aſſur'd, that a Death-Bed Repentance would be Effectual; yet who can tell, whether a Man may have Time for that Work, when he comes to Dye? Or, if he could be certain, that a lingring Sickneſs wou'd put an End to his Days; yet, how does he know, that God will then vouchſafe him the Grace of Repentance; and without that it is impoſſible he ſhould repent! —— O! how much rather may ſuch a one fear, leſt God ſhould be ſo provok'd, by the many wilful Refuſals of his Holy Spirit, as to cut ſhort his Day of Grace, and to deliver him over to a hardned and reprobate Mind!

The Scriptures aſſure us, there is a Time when Men ſhall call upon God, and he will not Hearken. *Becauſe*, ſays God, *I have Called, and ye Refuſed; I have ſtretched out my Hand, and no Man regarded. But ye have ſet at naught all my Counſel, and would none of my Reproof, I alſo will laugh at your Calamity, I will mock when your Fear cometh; when your Fear cometh as Deſolation, and your Deſtruction cometh as a Whirlwind; when Diſtreſs and Anguiſh cometh upon you. Then ſhall they Call upon me, but I will not Anſwer; they ſhall ſeek me early, but they ſhall not find me: For that they hated Knowledge, and did not chooſe the Fear of the Lord. They would none of my Counſel; they deſpiſed all my Reproof; therefore ſhall they eat of the Fruit of their own Way,* Prov. 1. 24, &c.

and

and be filled with their own Devices. The End of the Long-suffering and Forbearance of God is *to lead Men to Repentance*; but if, instead of that, it only hardens them in their Sins, and makes them resolve to go on in their wicked Courses, intending to repent when they come to Dye; how just may it be with God then, to leave them under all the Terrors and Agonies of a fearful Death; *to laugh at their Calamity, and to mock when their Fear cometh!*

Rom. 2. 4.

O! Consider this, all ye that forget God, lest he pluck ye away, and there be none to deliver ye; consider it in due Time, and be perswaded to set about the great Work of your Salvation, *to Day, while it is called to Day, before the Night cometh, when no Man can work*: Remember, that though it may be you are now in Health and Strength; in the Prime and Vigour of your Years; surrounded with the Pleasures of a great and splendid Fortune; yet that Death will quickly overtake you, and that nothing will then stand you in any stead but a good Conscience; neither Honours, nor Riches, nor any Thing else that Men are now so fond of, will then be able to give you one Moment's Reprieve, or afford you one comfortable Thought; nothing will be then Regarded but the Consciousness of having in some Measure answered the Ends for which God sent you into the World; of having kept *a good Conscience*,

nce, willing in all things to live Honestly; of having liv'd in the Fear and Love of God, *and in Simplicity and godly Sincerity, had your conversation in this World.*

It was this that made St. *Paul* desire *to be dissolved, and to be with Christ*; for he had *fought a good Fight, and finished his course, and kept the Faith*, and therefore could say with great Assurance, when *the Time of his departure was at hand, that there was laid up for him a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge should give him at that Day.* And it was this, that made a late pious * *Divine* of our Church, when he was near his Death, utter these remarkable Expressions.

2 Tim. 4. 7. 8.

* *Mr.* Kettlewell; *see the Preface to his five Discourses, publish'd since his Death.*

"I am entring upon my last Labour, the Lord gave, and he is now taking away, blessed be the Name of the Lord; for I thank my God, I am going without any Distrust, without the least Miss giving to a Place of Rest, and Joy, and everlasting Bliss. There is no Life like a happy Death. I have Endeavoured, even from my Youth, to approve my self a faithful Servant to my Great Master: I have taken some Pains in writing several Books; I have seriously consider'd them, and am fully Satisfied *(looking on those about him)* that you may find in them the Way to Heaven; the Chris-

"tian

" tian Duties contain'd therein have been my
" Practice, as well as Study, and now I find the
" Advantage of it, and therefore be careful to
" read them often and ſeriouſly, and live ſuit-
" able thereunto, that when you come to the
" Condition I am now in, you may dye with
" Comfort, as you ſee me do: I have ſome lit-
" tle Pain indeed; but my Pain is nothing ſo
" extraordinary as my Hopes; for I have ear-
" neſtly repented of all my Sins, and verily be-
" lieve, that through the tender Mercies of my
" God, and the Merits of my bleſſed Saviour
" *Jeſus Chriſt*, I ſhall be carried up into *Abra-*
" *ham's* Boſom. *After which*, it is ſaid, *he*
" *made this ſhort Prayer.* I wait, O God, for
" that everlaſting Reſt, which I want at pre-
" ſent, but ſhall not long; I am ready, when
" thou, my God, calleſt for me, yet can ſtay
" with Patience till thou pleaſeſt; for thy Time
" is the beſt Time, and thy Pleaſure the beſt
" Pleaſure.

See here the End of a Righteous Man; how calm, how ſerene and comfortable is his Death! Is there any thing like this in the Caſe of a Wicked Man when he comes to Dye! Alas! No; if you behold ſuch a one in his laſt Extremity, (unleſs he dyes hardned and impenitent) you will hear little elſe but bitter Reflections, ſad Bewailings, wretched Upbraidings of himſelf for the Folly and Madneſs of his paſt Life; and theſe ending in deſpairing Sighs and

nd Groans, black and dreadful to himſelf, and very terrible to all about him.——— May God, of his infinite Mercy, keep every one from ſuch a dreadful Hour; and *teach us all ſo to number our Days, as to apply our Hearts unto true Wiſdom*, that Wiſdom which will make us wiſe unto Salvation, and fill our Minds with Comfort and Satisfaction, while we live; and, what is of infinite more Value, give us, when we come to dye, *that Peace of God which paſſeth all Underſtanding*, through *Jeſus Chriſt* our Lord. *Amen.*

THE

THE GREAT IMPORTANCE OF A Religious LIFE.

CHAP. III.

HItherto I have Conſider'd the Advantages of Religion, as they reſpect only our Well-being in this World and our going comfortably out of it: But, as there are Advantages attending a good Life, infinitely beyond all that has been mentioned, Namely, that it will intitle us to *the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*; I ſhall endeavour to ſhew, in the laſt Place, that a ſerious and conſcientious Obſervance of the Duties of Religion, will moſt certainly be rewarded with eternal Happineſs in the Life to come.

And here I ſhall not preſume ſo much, as to Aim at a Deſcription of *that exceeding weight*

of Glory, which God has reſerved for them that truly love him: In the Scripture, indeed, the Glories of the other World are repreſented to us, in Condeſcention to our weak Capacities, as *a Kingdom*, and *a Crown*, *an Eternal Kingdom*, and *a never-fading Crown*; but the State of the other World is a State ſo unknown to us, and ſo much above our imperfect Conceptions, that we ſhall never be able fully to comprehend it, till we arrive at the actual Enjoyment of it; for though we know, that we ſhall there ſee God, and that the Bleſſed Jeſus who *lov'd us, and gave himſelf for us*; and ſhall enjoy him who is the Source and Fountain of all Good; that we ſhall there converſe with Saints and Angels, and for ever be ſinging Anthems of Praiſe to our great Creator and Redeemer; yet how great the Pleaſure of this will be, and with what Extaſies and Raptures our Souls ſhall then break forth, when they come to taſte of that *fulneſs of Joy, which is in the preſence of God for evermore*, is what our finite Underſtandings cannot poſſibly reach to the Knowledge of: This we may reſt aſſur'd of, that the Things which God has reſerv'd for them that love him, are ſuch, *as neither Eye has ſeen, nor Ear heard, neither has it entered into the Heart of Man to conceive*; and this is ſufficient for us at preſent, and as much as we need to know concerning this Matter; and therefore all curious Enquiries into the Nature of the Happineſs of the next Life, will be of

little uſe to us now; they may fill our Heads with fine Speculations, but will ſignify little to direct our Practice: What we are more concern'd to know, is, that our ſincere Obedience to God's Commandments will certainly be rewarded with Eternal Life and Happineſs; this, indeed, is a Matter of great Importance to us, to be well aſſur'd of; for, (as the 1 Cor. 15. 19. *Apoſtle* ſpeaks) *If in this Life only we have hope in Chriſt, we are of all Men moſt Miſerable.*

There are not wanting ſome indeed, that would have us believe, that we Dye like the Beaſts that periſh, and that, when we leave this World, there is an End of us: But theſe upon Inquiry, I believe, will be always found to be ſuch, who firſt Live, as if there was no God, and then endeavour to perſuade themſelves and others, that there really is none; ſo that inſtead of regulating their Practice by their Faith, they do moſt prepoſterouſly ſquare their Faith by their Manners: I ſhall not concern my ſelf, at preſent, with theſe Men, my Deſign being chiefly for the ſake of thoſe, who believe the Chriſtian Religion, and the Revelations of God's Will in the Holy Scriptures; and ſurely to ſuch it can be no Doubt, but that in thoſe Sacred Writings *we have Eternal Life*, and that the Performance of God's Commandments is the certain Condition of obtaining it.

Indeed,

Indeed, natural Religion will teach us, not only that *God is, but that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently ſeek Him*: But it has pleaſed God, of his great Goodneſs, not to leave us to the Light of Nature to find out this important Truth; the Rewards of another Life are ſo fully and clearly reveal'd in the Writings of our Saviour and his Apoſtles; and the Way to obtain them is there ſo plainly laid down, that there is no Room for any Doubt or Uncertainty about that Matter. Whatever dark or imperfect Notions the *Jews*, as well as *Gentiles*, had of a future State, 'tis certain, *that Life and Immortality is now brought to Light by the Goſpel*; and we may reſt aſſur'd, that though, when we dye we ſhall be laid in the cold Chambers of the Grave, and there become the Food of Worms, and moulder into Duſt and Rottenneſs; yet it will not be long *'ere this Corruptible ſhall put on Incorruption, and this Mortal ſhall put on Immortality. For God hath appointed a Day, in the which he will judge the World in Righteouſneſs, by that Man whom he has ordained; whereof he hath given Aſſurance unto all Men, in that he has raiſed him from the Dead.* A Day, *wherein we muſt all appear before the Judgment ſeat of Chriſt, that every one may receive the things done in his Body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. And then all that*

1 Cor. 15. 53.

Acts 17. 31.

2 Cor. 5. 10.

John 5. 28, 29. *are in their Graves ſhall hear his Voice and ſhall come forth; they that have done Good, unto the Reſurrection of Life, and they that have done Evil, unto the Reſurrection of Damnation.*

Whoever then believes the Goſpel, (as every one muſt, that lives under the Influence of it, unleſs he is wretchedly blinded by his Luſts and Paſſions) can never doubt of theſe two great Articles of the Chriſtian Religion, *the Reſurrection of the Body, and the Life Everlaſting.* The Poſſibility of the former has been made evident by the Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt from the Dead, and the Certainty of the latter ſufficiently appears, not only from the expreſs Revelations of God in the Holy Scriptures, but from the whole Tenor of the Chriſtian Religion; every Precept of which tends to purify and refine our Natures, and to fit and prepare us for the Society of Saints and Angels in another Life; the *Apoſtle* aſſures us, that *God hath not appointed us to*

1 Theſ. 5. 9, 10. *Wrath, but to obtain Salvation by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt who died for us, that we ſhould live together with him.* And St.

St. Joh. 3. 16. *John* tells us, that *God ſo loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, to the End that all that believe in him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting Life.*

If then we believe, that God is infinitely just and true, we can never doubt, but that at the great Day of Retribution, *he will render to every Man according to his Deeds; to them who by patient continuance in well doing, seek for Glory, and Honour, and Immortality,* He will give *eternal Life; but to them who are contentious, and do not obey the Truth, but obey Unrighteousness,* he will pour forth *Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguish, upon every Soul of Man that doth Evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.* Rom. 2. 6, 7, 8, 9.

Our Saviour in his Exposition of the Parable of the *Tares*, tells us, That *at the End of the World, the Son of Man shall send forth his Angels, and they shall gather out of his Kingdom all things that offend, and them which do Iniquity; and shall cast them into a Furnace of Fire, there shall be wailing and gnashing of Teeth.* And so in his Exposition of the Parable of the *Net*, in the same Chapter, he says, That *at the End of the World, the Angels shall come forth, and sever the Wicked from among the Just; and shall cast them into the Furnace of Fire, there shall be wailing and gnashing of Teeth.* And so again, *Mat.* 25. we are told by our Saviour, That *when the Son of Man shall come in his Glory, and all the Holy Angels with* Matt. 13. 40. ver. 49, 50. ver. 31, 32, 33, 34.

him, then ſhall he ſit upon the Throne of his Glory, and before him ſhall be gathered all Nations; and he ſhall ſeparate them one from another, as a Shepherd divideth his Sheep from the Goats; and he ſhall ſet the Sheep on his right Hand, but the Goats on the left; Then ſhall he ſay unto them on his right Hand, Come ye Bleſſed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Beginning of the World. But to them on the left Hand, Depart from me, ye Curſed, into everlaſting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels. And theſe ſhall go away into everlaſting Puniſhment; but the Righteous into Life Eternal.

This, as it is a plain but lively Deſcription of the awful Solemnity of that great and tremenduous Day, *when the Son of Man ſhall come in the Glory of his Father, with his Angels, to judge the quick and the dead*; ſo it is ſufficient to convince us, that though *without Holineſs no Man ſhall ſee the Lord*, yet that every one who believes the Goſpel, and ſincerely obeys the Precepts of it, ſhall aſſuredly *enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*; this is the very Purchaſe of Chriſt's Blood, and the End, for which he was contented to be given up into the Hands of cruel Men, to be buffeted, ſpit upon, and evil intreated, and at laſt to ſuffer a cruel and ignominious Death upon the Croſs. *He gave himſelf for us*, ſays St. *Paul*, *that he might redeem*

Matt. 16. 27.

Heb. 12. 14.

Matt. 7. 21.

deem us from all Iniquity, and become the Author of Eternal Salvation to all them that obey him. Again, says the same *Apostle, though he was Rich, yet for our sakes he became Poor, that we through his Poverty might be made Rich. He was wounded,* says the *Prophet, for our Transgressions, he was bruised for our Iniquities, the Chastisement of our Peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.* Isa. 53. 5.

The Redemption of Mankind was thought a Design worthy the Son of God: Of so great Worth and Value in his Sight were the Souls of Men, that he esteem'd nothing too much or too great to suffer for their sakes; he saw and pitied our Misery, and knew, that without a Saviour we must be lost for ever; and therefore condescended so far, as to humble himself even to the Death upon the Cross for us miserable Sinners, who lay in Darkness and in the Shadow of Death, that he might make us the Children of God, and exalt us to everlasting Life; so that, though we *were sometimes afar off,* yet being *now made nigh by the Blood of Christ, we are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the Saints, and of the Houshold of God*; and if we are careful to perform our Parts, we may assuredly say with St. *Paul,* that *henceforth there is laid up for us a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord the Righteous Judge shall give* Eph. 2. 13, 19. 2 Tim. 4. 8.

us at that Day; for we have the Promiſe of him who is *Truth* it ſelf, and cannot deceive us, that if we are *faithful unto Death, he will give us a Crown of Life.*

Rev. 2. 10.

And what a glorious Incitement now is this to all Men, to *live ſoberly, righteouſly and godly in this preſent World*; what can we deſire more to make us *ſtedfaſt and unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord*, than to know, *that our Labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord*; but that in a little Time, all our Services will be infinitely rewarded; and we ſhall be receiv'd into a Place of everlaſting Reſt and Peace; where we ſhall for ever adore and praiſe the Author of our Salvation, and contemplate the glorious Perfections of his Majeſty, with a Joy and Satisfaction, infinitely exceeding all that we can now poſſibly conceive.

Cor. 15. 58.

And, as the Conſideration of theſe things cannot but at preſent fill our Hearts *with Joy unſpeakable*; and excite us continually *to give Thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light; who has deliver'd us from the Power of Darkneſs, and tranſlated us into the Kingdom of his dear Son*: So when we come to have a nearer and more immediate View of the Glories of that Kingdom, which God has prepared for us, how will our Souls break forth into Extaſies of Love and Joy!

Col. 1. 12, 13.

Joy! How will it transport us to see him, whom we have lov'd and faithfully serv'd! To see him, not arraign'd for a Malefactor, nor hanging in a shameful Manner upon the Cross, but to see him in all his Majesty and Glory, sitting in a triumphant Manner upon his Throne, incompass'd about with Millions of holy Angels; to see him, I say, not as an angry and incens'd Judge, but as a merciful Saviour and Redeemer, looking upon his faithful and beloved Servants with the tenderest Compassion, and receiving them to the Arms of his Mercy, with those gracious Words! —— *Come ye Blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom, prepared for you from the Foundation of the World.*

But then, on the other Hand, with what Anguish and Despair will wicked Men behold the dreadful Solemnities of that Day! How will they tremble and be confounded, when the *Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven, with his mighty Angels, in flaming Fire, taking Vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:* When they shall see the *Heavens passing away with a great Noise, and the Elements melting with fervent Heat, the Earth also, and the Works that are therein burnt up:* When they shall behold the Jaws of Hell open to receive them, and the great Judge of the World, with Terror in his Looks, ready to pro-

2 Thess. 1. 7, 8.

2 Pet. 3. 10.

pronounce that dreadful Sentence —— *Depart from me, ye Curſed, into everlaſting Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels.*

Lord! What Confuſion and Agonies will thoſe Souls be in, to whom theſe terrible Words ſhall then be ſpoken! How will they *call upon the Mountains and Rocks to fall on them, and to hide them from the Face of him that ſitteth on the Throne, and from the Wrath of the Lamb!* But alas! What will that avail them, when *the great Day of his Wrath is come!* If the Saviour of the World condemns them, who ſhall intercede in their Behalf! It will be too late to cry out for Mercy, when the Time of Juſtice is come; too late to lament their Folly and Madneſs, when the Time of Working is over; all Prayers and Intreaties, all Tears and Repentance will then be in vain; *he that is unjuſt* muſt be *unjuſt ſtill, and he that is filthy* muſt be *filthy ſtill*; *As the Tree is fallen, ſo it muſt lye* for ever. The Time of Trial, the Day of Grace is ended, and *there remains no more Sacrifice for Sin*; but a *fiery Indignation* muſt *devour* them; the dreadful Hour is come, when they muſt be baniſhed for ever from the Enjoyment of him, *in whoſe preſence* alone *is fulneſs of Joy*, and be doom'd to thoſe Lakes of Fire and Brimſtone, *where the Worm dyeth not, and the Fire is not quenched*; where they muſt

Rev. 6. 16.

Rev. 22. 11.

Heb. 10. 26, 27.

nuſt be bound in everlaſting Chains of Dark-
neſs, and be *Day and Night for ever*
nd ever tormented by the Devil and
is accurſed Spirits, thoſe cruel and
nrelenting Beings, in the burning and ſcorch-
g Flames of a moſt outragious and never to
e extinguiſh'd Fire. Rev. 20. 10.

O! Who can think of theſe things without
ſolving in good Earneſt to ſecure a happy E-
rnity by a Life of Virtue and Religion!
Vho, that believes *the wicked ſhall be turned in-*
o Hell, and all the People that forget God; and
nſiders what it is to dwell in the moſt exqui-
e Miſery and Torments to all Eternity, will
t immediately give up himſelf to the Service
d Obedience of the Bleſſed Jeſus, and reſolve
have no Fellowſhip with the unfruitful Works
Darkneſs! In ſhort, who that is truly wiſe,
d conſiders that Time it ſelf is ſhort, and that
e Time of Man is much ſhorter; that Eter-
ty has neither End nor Change, and that
ery Man is haſtning to this eternal and un-
angeable State, and will in a little time be
mmon'd to appear before the awful Tribunal
God; there to give an Account of his Ac-
ons, and according as he has behav'd himſelf
this Life, be then conſign'd to a Place of
dleſs Happineſs or Miſery; I ſay, who, that
flects upon theſe great and important Truths
ith that Seriouſneſs and Concern which they
ſerve, would ever play the Knave for a little

Pre-

Preferment, or part with that invaluable Prize a good Conſcience, for the greateſt Happineſ this World could promiſe him! Is it poſſibl for a Man, that conſiders, what it is to be u der the eternal Diſpleaſure of an Almighty Go to do any thing wilfully and deliberately to o fend his Divine Majeſty? O! Rather will n ſuch a one (unleſs he is abandon'd to the grea eſt Folly and Madneſs) make it the Study a Buſineſs of his Life to ſecure an Intereſt in t Favour and Love of God, by doing every thi that he knows will be pleaſing in his Sight; pecially when he conſiders what Obligations is under ſo to do; when he reflects upon t infinite Love of God, manifeſted in all t Works of his Creation and Providence, but pecially in that ſtupenduous Myſtery of our R demption; when he thinks *upon the bread and length, the height and depth of that love God*, which mov'd him to ſend his only Beg ten Son into the World *to be the Propitiati for our Sins*, and to ſuffer a cruel and ignomi ous Death upon the Croſs, *that we might periſh, but have everlaſting Life*. O! How it poſſible, but ſuch a one muſt be filled with grateful a Senſe of what God has done for hi as to endeavour all that in him lies to requ the infinite Love of ſo merciful a Father, kind and loving a Saviour! Surely the Love God muſt conſtrain us; but if there is any o ſo ſtupid and inſenſible, as not to be wroug up

upon ſuch powerful Motives, let him reflect upon *the Terrors of the Lord*, and conſider with himſelf, how he ſhall be able to *dwell with everlaſting Burnings*; let him think a while upon the miſerable Condition of thoſe wretched Souls, that are now ſhut up in the Regions of everlaſting Darkneſs; and tell me then, whether he thinks the ſhort and momentary Pleaſures of a wicked Life will compenſate for endleſs Miſery and Torments? Iſa. 33. 14.

There is no one, I believe, that thinks at all, but muſt think otherwiſe; but the great Misfortune is, many Men are ſo agitated by their Luſts and Paſſions, that they are ſeldom cool enough for ſober Reflections; but would they be perſuaded frequently to meditate upon Death and Judgment; would they repreſent to their Minds what a vaſt Diſproportion there is betwixt Time and Eternity, and conſider, that the Pleaſures of Sin, at beſt, *are but for a Seaſon*, but that its Puniſhment is endleſs and intolerable: I ſay, could Men be brought to think of theſe Things with any Seriouſneſs, I doubt not, but ſuch Thoughts would, in Time, have their proper Effect, and would ſo effectually convince them of the great Folly and Danger of Sin, as to make them in good Earneſt ſet about the great and important Work of their Salvation.

O! let me then entreat every one with all the Earneſtneſs, that a Matter of ſuch vaſt Im-

portance does require, frequently and seriously to think upon that great Account they must one Day give; to consider with themselves how their Accounts stand, with respect to another Life; and what a dreadful Condition they will be in, if they should be call'd to appear at the *Judgment Seat of Christ*, before they have made their Peace with God, and secur'd an Interest in the Merits and Intercession of their great Judge; but especially let me persuade those, that are plunging themselves in Sensuality and Wickedness, to stand still a Moment, and consider whither they are going; let me beg of them as they have any Regard for their present Peace and Happiness, or any Value for their precious Souls; as they would not leave this World, under the Terrors and Agonies of a guilty Conscience, nor appear at the last Day, in the Presence of God, of Angels, and of Men, under all the Circumstances of Horror, Shame and Confusion; and lastly, as they would not then be banished from the Presence of God, for ever, and be cast into the bottomless Pit of Destruction, to be there tormented without Measure, and without End; let me, I say, prevail upon them, not to delay their Repentance one Moment, but immediately forsake their evil Ways, and *turn unto the Lord their God, who is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and great kindness*; and who has assur'd us by his *Prophet, that when the wicked Man turneth away*

Joel 2.13.

Ezeck 18. 27.

way from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his Soul alive.

As for those happy Christians, that are entred upon a good Life, and are engaged in the Practice of Virtue and Religion; who make the Glory of God, and the Salvation of their own and others Souls, their *great Care and Concern*, I need only exhort them to go on in their Christian Course with Courage and Resolution, *to hold fast their profession*, and with an unwearied Diligence *to press towards the mark, for the Prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*, nothing doubting, but *that he who hath begun a good Work in them, will perform it until the Day of Jesus Christ.* God is faithful that has promis'd, and therefore they may rest assured, *that in due season they shall reap, if they faint not. Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come; and his Reward is with him, to give to every Man according as his Work shall be. To him that overcometh, he will grant to sit with him in his Throne, even as he also overcame, and is set down with his Father in his Throne.*

Phil. 3. 14. Phil. 1. 6. Gal. 6. 9. Heb. 10. 37. Rev. 22. 12. Rev. 3 21.

O happy, happy Time, for those blessed Souls, *who have Fought the good Fight and kept the Faith!* All their Labours will then be at an End, and that *Crown of Life*, which was promis'd to and reserv'd for

Rev. 2. 10.

them, will then be beſtow'd upon them, and they ſhall be admitted *to an Inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away*; they ſhall then be received into a Place of endleſs Bliſs and Joy, *where there ſhall be no more Death, neither Sorrow nor Crying, neither ſhall there be any more Pain; but all Tears ſhall be wiped from their Eyes*, and they ſhall for ever enjoy the moſt perfect and conſummate Happineſs, and ſing Eternal *Allelujahs of Praiſe and Thankſgiving unto him that ſitteth upon the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.* Amen.

1 Pet. 1. 4.

Rev. 21. 4.

FINIS.

A Morning-Prayer FOR A FAMILY.

O MOST Gracious God and Loving Father! In all Humility of Soul and Body, we preſent our ſelves before the Throne of thy Majeſty and Glory, acknowledging that we are thy Creatures, and that from thy bountiful Hands we have receiv'd many great and exceeding Bleſſings.

By thee at firſt we were wonderfully made; by thy Power we have ever ſince been preſerved, and it is owing to thy great Mercy and Goodneſs that we have not been cut off in the midſt of our Sins; but that thou haſt been patient and long-ſuffering towards us, and haſt given us this Opportunity of coming into thy

Presence, to renew our Praises and Acknowledgments to thy Divine Majesty.

O Lord, thy Compassions fail not, but they are renewed every Morning: By thee we have been preserv'd this Night past, and to thy Goodness we ascribe it, that we are brought in Health and Safety to the Beginning of this Day.

Accept, we humbly pray thee, of our unfeigned Thanks for all the Mercies and Blessings which thou hast been pleas'd to bestow upon us, and pardon we beseech thee, for the Sake of thy Son Christ Jesus, our great Unworthiness of what thou hast done for us. Give us such a Sense of thy infinite Love and Kindness, as may make us asham'd of our past Ingratitude towards thee, and inspire us with more vigorous and hearty Endeavours to serve thee for the Time to come.

To that End vouchsafe us such a Measure of thy Grace and Holy Spirit, as may enable us to bear up against the Tryals and Temptations of this wicked World. Give us a true Sense of the inestimable Value of our Souls, that we may make it the chief Care and Concern of our Lives to work out our Salvation, and to secure an Interest in thy Favour, which is better than Life it self.

Draw our Minds from the Love of this World, and teach us to use it with Temperance, Sobriety and Moderation, with an intire Trust and Dependance on thy Fatherly Providence,

dence, and with a perfect Submiſſion to thy bleſſed Will in all Things.

Root out of our Hearts, O Lord, the Seeds of Envy, Hatred and Malice; of Cenſoriouſneſs and Uncharitableneſs; of Lying and Slandering, and whatever elſe is contrary to a truly Chriſtian Spirit; and endue us, we moſt humbly pray thee, with that Meekneſs and Humility which is in thy Sight of ſo great Value, and with all thoſe Holy and Chriſtian Diſpoſitions which thou loveſt and delighteſt in.

Inſtruct us in all the Particulars of our Duty which we owe to thee, our Neighbour and our ſelves; guide us by thy Right Hand, and conduct us by thy good Spirit through all the Buſineſs and Affairs of this Life; teach us to act with Faithfulneſs and Honeſty in every Thing that we take in Hand, and give us ſuch a Dread of thy Diſpleaſure, and ſuch a Senſe of thy All-ſeeing Eye as may ſecure us by thy Grace againſt all the Temptations of the World, the Fleſh and the Devil.

Be with us, O Lord, this Day, in our going out and coming in; preſerve us from the Dangers of evil Company, from the Deceitfulneſs of our own Hearts; and defend us more eſpecially from thoſe Sins that do moſt eaſily beſet and inſnare us. Let thy Bleſſing accompany all our honeſt Labours and Endeavours, and vouchſafe us ſuch a Meaſure of

This is to be omitted on a Sunday Morning, and what follows to be us'd inſtead thereof.

of Health and other temporal Mercies, as thou
seest best and most fitting for us. We desire,
O Lord, to leave our selves and all our Affairs
in thy Hands, humbly beseeching thee to take
us and all that belongs to us under the Protec-
tion of thy good Providence, and so to bless, di-
rect and guide us in this Life, that we may at
last obtain that greatest of all Blessings, the E-
ternal Salvation of our Immortal Souls, through
the Merits and for the Sake of thy dear Son
and our alone Saviour, *Jesus Christ*, for whom
our Souls do adore and praise thy glorious
Name, and in whose most holy Words we sum
up our own and the Wants of all Mankind,
saying, *Our Father*, &c.

On Sunday Morning this is to be us'd instead of the preceding Paragraph.

Dispose our Hearts, O
Lord, we humbly beseech
thee, to a serious Attendance
upon thee in all holy Du-
ties; make us duly mindful
of all thy Sacred Institutions; and grant that
we may never so far forget the Interest of our
Souls, as to neglect the religious Observance of
the Christian Sabbath. And since thou hast
brought us to the Beginning of this Holy Day,
be thou graciously pleased to take us into thy
Protection, and to assist us in a right Discharge
of the Duties of it. Withdraw our Minds from
the Cares, and Business and Pleasures of this
Life, which will shortly have an End; that we
may more freely attend upon the great Concern
of that far better Life, which is to last for ever
more

more. Give us awful Thoughts of thy great Majesty, and a lively Sense of our own Wants, that our Prayers and Praises, and all our Services this Day may be offered up in such a serious and devout manner, as may render them acceptable in thy Sight. Make us attentive to thy Holy Word, and to all the good Instructions that shall this Day be given us, and grant that we may not rest in any outward Performances, but by a right Use of thy Holy Ordinances, may endeavour to grow in Grace, and to become every Day better Christians, and so to improve in all virtuous and godly Living, that when this short Life shall have an End, we may dwell with Thee in Life Everlasting, through the Merits of thy Son and our alone Saviour Jesus Christ, for whom our Souls do Bless and Praise Thee, and in whose most Holy Words, we sum up our own, and the Wants of all Mankind, Saying,

Our Father, &c.

AN Evening-Prayer FOR A FAMILY.

O MOST Merciful and Gracious Lord God, the great Creator and Preſerver, and Governor of the World: Thou art Infinite in Mercy and Goodneſs to all that call upon thee faithfully, and haſt promis'd, that when two or three are gather'd together in thy Name, thou wilt be in the midſt of them: Look down we humbly beſeech thee, upon us thy unworthy Creatures, who are here aſſembled before thee, acknowledging that thou art a God greatly to be fear'd for thy Power and Juſtice, greatly to be belov'd for thy Infinite Perfections and Goodneſs, and greatly to be prais'd for thy liberal Bounty and Goodneſs: But as for our ſelves, we confeſs, O Lord, that we are vile and ſinful Creatures; that we have in many Thing acted

foolishly

foolishly and wickedly, and have neither lov'd Thee, fear'd Thee, nor obey'd Thee as we ought to have done: Our Sins are so many and so great, that should'st thou deal with us as we have deserv'd, we could expect nothing from Thee, but the Severities of thy just Wrath and Displeasure.

But, O gracious Father, who delightest not in the Death of a Sinner, look upon us, we beseech thee, in thy Son Christ Jesus, and for the sake of his meritorious Death and Sufferings, pardon our many and great Transgressions of thy Holy Laws; and grant that for the Time to come, we may be more careful to please thee, and more sincerely devoted to thy Love and Obedience, than we ever have yet been.

Convince us truly, O Lord, of the great Folly and Danger of Sin, and teach us ever to value thy Love and Favour more than Life it self: O make us always duly mindful of the Interest of our precious Souls, that we may live as becomes the Gospel of Christ, denying all Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and living righteously, soberly, and godly in this present World.

To that End, vouhsafe us such Aids and Assistances of thy Grace and holy Spirit, as may carry us through all the Temptations of this World, and fortify us against the Assaults of our great Adversary, the Devil, who is daily lying in wait to destroy us.

Mor-

Mortify in us all irregular Appetites and Pa
ſions; rectify the Diſorder of our Wills; cleanſe
and purify our corrupt Natures, and make us ſo
conformable to thy Laws, that Religion ma
be our chief Delight and Pleaſure, and the doing
thy Will, our greateſt Joy and Satisfaction.

Suffer us not, O merciful God, to be led a
way by the vain and fooliſh Cuſtoms of thi
World, nor ſeduced from our Duty by th
Company and Converſation of wicked Men
but grant that we may be ſo reſolutely bent up
on doing thy Will, that we may make it ou
great Endeavour to pleaſe thee above all Things
and to diſcharge our Duty in the ſeveral Pla
ces and Stations, wherein thy Providence i
pleas'd to place us.

Make us duly Mindful, that thou art preſen
every where, and privy to our moſt ſecre
Thoughts; that we may never dare to do an
Thing but what thou approveſt, and of whic
we may give a comfortable Account at th
Great Day of the Lord Jeſus: O fit and pre
pare us for that ſolemn Time, by a Life o
Virtue and Religion, that when we come t
appear before the great Judge of all the World
we may be found of the Number of thoſe
happy Souls, whom thou ſhalt then pronounc
Bleſſed.

Extend thy Mercy, O God, to the whol
Race of Mankind; have Pity upon all *Jew*
Turks, *Infidels* and *Hereticks*, and bring the
t

to the Light, and Knowledge, and Practice of thy Laws.

Bleſs thy holy Catholick Church, and eſpecially that Part of it which thou haſt planted in theſe Kingdoms; remove out of it all Errors and Corruptions, all Diviſions and Diſſentions, and grant that the Lives of Chriſtians may be Holy and Exemplary, and ſuch as becomes the Goſpel of our Bleſſed Saviour.

Reform all things amiſs in theſe Kingdoms; Root out from among us all Irreligion and Prophaneſs; all Uncharitableneſs and Animoſities: Pardon our great and crying Sins; avert the Evils that we have deſerv'd; continue the Light of thy glorious Goſpel among us, and give us all Grace to turn from the Evil of our Ways unto thee, the Lord our God, that thou may'ſt delight over us to do us good; to build us up, and not to deſtroy us.

Bleſs our Sovereign Lord the King, and all that are in Authority under him, both in Church and State: Make them all in their ſeveral Places and Stations uſeful and ſerviceable to thy Glory, and the Good and Welfare of this Church and Nation.

And O thou, who art the Father of Mercies and God of all Comfort, look down with Pity and Compaſſion upon all thy afflicted Servants every where; give them Courage and Patience, Comfort and Support in thee, and in thy good Time, a joyful Deliverance out of all their Troubles.

Send down thy Bleſſings Spiritual and Temporal upon all our Friends and Relations; do good unto thoſe that have at any time done or wiſh'd us Evil; and vouchſafe unto every one of us, and to all Chriſtians, whatever thou knoweſt to be beſt, in reference to our Temporal and Eternal Welfare.

And now, O Lord, we deſire with all Humility of Soul and Body, to adore thy Incomprehenſible Majeſty, and to praiſe thy great and glorious Name for all thy manifold Mercies and Favours vouchſafed to us and all Mankind, but above all for thy aſtoniſhing Love in reconciling the World to thy ſelf, by the Death and the Sufferings of thy dear Son.

We bleſs thee for our Creation and Preſervation; for our Health, Strength, Peace and Safety; for providing for our Bodies, and taking Care of our Souls, and for delivering us from thoſe many Evils that we have moſt juſtly deſerved.

O Lord, Imprint on our Hearts ſuch a deep Senſe of thy Mercies, that we may ſhew forth thy Praiſes not only with our Lips, but in our Lives, by giving up our ſelves to thy Service, and by walking before thee in Holineſs and Righteouſneſs all the Days of our Lives.

We confeſs, O Lord, that we are unworthy of the leaſt of all thy Favours; but in Confidence of thy great Mercy and Goodneſs we beg leave to commend our ſelves, our Souls, and Bodies, and all that belong to us, to thy

Fa-

Fatherly Care and good Providence. Thou art our only Safety and Defence: O be thou graciouſly pleas'd to take us this Night under thy Almighty Protection, that no Evil come near to hurt us.

Refreſh our Bodies with quiet Reſt and Sleep, and our Souls with the Conſolations of thy holy Spirit; and when thou ſhalt think fit to take us out of this World, give us everlaſting Reſt and Peace in thy Eternal Kingdom, through the Merits and for the Sake of our Bleſſed Saviour and Redeemer, Jeſus Chriſt, who hath taught us when we Pray, to ſay,

Our Father, &c.

A Morning-Prayer for a Perſon in Private.

O Moſt Great, moſt Mighty, and moſt Glorious Lord God! Look down from the Habitation of thy Holineſs upon me thy unworthy Creature, who am come into thy Preſence to adore thy Incomprehenſible Majeſty, and to preſent before thee the Morning-Sacrifice of my unfeigned Praiſes for thy many and undeſerv'd Favours beſtowed upon me.

O Lord, I acknowledge that to thee of Right belongs Eternal Honour, Glory, Praiſe and Adoration; for thou art the ſovereign Lord of Heaven and Earth, by whom all Things were made, and by whoſe infinite Power and Goodneſs, they are preſerv'd and kept in Being.

Bleſſed be thy unſpeakable Goodneſs, that has advanc'd me to ſuch a degree of Being, that I am in ſome Meaſure capable to know thee, to love thee, and to ſerve thee, and obey thee.

Bleſſed be thy Name, O Lord, that I was born of Chriſtian Parents, and early dedicated to thee by Baptiſm, and that by thy Grace and Goodneſs I have been preſerv'd to this Moment, and

and have in any Meaſure eſcap'd the Pollutions of this wicked World.

I bleſs thee likewiſe, O Lord, for thy Temporal Mercies, and in particular for the Refreſhments of the Night paſt; for protecting me from all evil Accidents, and for raiſing me up in Health and Safety to praiſe thy Goodneſs.

Pardon, O moſt gracious God, all the unworthy Returns I have made for ſo much Goodneſs and Mercy, and vouchſafe me ſuch a Senſe of thy infinite Love, as may inſpire me with more vigorous and hearty Endeavours to ſerve thee for the time to come.

O Lord, I acknowledge, that I am a weak and frail Creature, and that without thy Help, I am not able to bear up againſt the Trials and Temptations of this World; but ſince thou haſt promis'd to give thy holy Spirit to them that ask it, I am emboldned to implore his Divine Aſſiſtance to ſtrengthen my Weakneſs, to help my Infirmities, and ſo to fortify my Mind, that I may not be tempted above what I am able to bear, nor ſeduc'd from my Duty to thee, by the deceitful Enticements of the World, the Fleſh or the Devil.

Mortify in me, O God, all Pride and Vain-Glory; all Bitterneſs and Uncharitableneſs; all Envy, Hatred and Malice; and ſuffer me not to be led away by any of the fooliſh Cuſtoms and falſe Maxims of the World: And, O merciful Father, be thou pleas'd of thy great Good-

neſs, to endue me with that Wiſdom which is from above, which is firſt Pure and then Peaceable; with that Meekneſs and Humility, which is in thy Sight of ſo great Price, and with that truly Chriſtian Temper and Diſpoſition, which thou loveſt and delighteſt in.

Lord, ſanctify unto me all thy Fatherly Diſpenſations, and let every Thing thou ſhalt think fit to ſend me, prove a Bleſſing and Advantage to my Soul. Give me Grace to be entirely ſubmiſſive and contented under all the Afflictions, Trials and Diſappointments, which thy Wiſdom ſhall judge proper to bring me to thy ſelf; and grant that by every Adverſity that ſhall befal me, I may be wean'd from the World, and more cloſely united unto thee.

Make me always mindful of my own Frailty, of the Shortneſs and Uncertainty of this Life, and of the Eternity of the next. Give me Grace ſo to live as I ſhall wiſh I had done when I come to dye; let not Sickneſs or Death ever ſurpriſe me unawares, or find me in a ſtate unprovided; but grant that I may finiſh the Work thou haſt given me to do, before the Night cometh when no Man can work; O let me live in ſuch a conſtant Preparation for my latter End, that how ſuddenly ſoever thou ſhalt be pleas'd to take me out of this World, I may be found ready and prepar'd for my great Account, through the Merits of my bleſſed Saviour and Redeemer, Jeſus Chriſt.

Be

Be with me, O Lord, this Day in all Places, and upon all Occasions. Direct and guide me, sanctify and preserve me. Keep me both outwardly in my Body, and inwardly in Soul. Let thy Blessing accompany all my honest Designs and Undertakings, and grant that I may take nothing in Hand, but what is agreeable to thy Blessed Will. Give unto me and all that belong to me, such a Measure of Health and other Temporal Blessings, as thou seest best and most fitting for us; but above all Things, give us thy Grace and Favour, that our Lives may be Holy, our Deaths Comfortable, and our Eternal State Happy and Glorious with Thee, through the Merits of thy Son and our alone Saviour Jesus Christ the Righteous, in whose most Holy Words I sum up my own, and the Wants of all Mankind, saying, *Our Father*, &c.

This is to be omitted on a Sunday Morning, and what follows is to be us'd instead thereof.

Accept, I beseech thee, O most gracious God, my hearty Desires in an especial manner to glorify thee on that Day which thou hast peculiarly sanctified for thy Worship and Service.

Upon Sunday Morning instead of the preceding Paragraph, this may be used.

I bless thy Holy Name, O Lord, who by thy Almighty Power madest the Heavens and the Earth, and all that therein is, and preservest and governest all that thou hast made.

I bleſs thee, O Lord, who madeſt Man after thine own Image, enduing him with Underſtanding, and Reaſon, and Liberty, making him capable of knowing and loving and enjoying thee his Creator.

Above all, I bleſs and magnify thy Holy Name, O Lord, Heavenly Father, that thou haſt given thine only Son, Jeſus Chriſt, for the Redemption of Mankind; that he took our Nature upon him; that he dyed for our ſake; that he is riſen again from the Dead; that he aſcended into Heaven, and that he there ſitteth at thy right Hand to make Interceſſion for us; that he hath made known to us the Way to eternal Life, giving us his Word for our Direction, and his Holy Spirit for our Guide and Aſſiſtance.

Bleſſed be thy Holy Name, that thou haſt appointed this Day, not only for a Reſt from our ordinary Labours and Employments, but chiefly for a perpetual Commemoration of theſe thy Favours, and for the giving us ſpecial Opportunities for thy Worſhip and Service, and the Care of our Souls.

My Soul deſires to bleſs thee, that thou haſt made me a Partaker of all theſe ineſtimable Favours.

O Lord, prepare my Heart for attending upon thee in thy Houſe. Afford me thy gracious Aſſiſtance in all the Parts of thy Service. Let thy Word make deep and laſting Impreſ-

ſions

ſions upon me. Help me diligently to improve all Opportunities that ſhall be afforded me this Day, whether publick or private, to the Glory of thy great Name, and to the Benefit and Comfort of my Soul, through Jeſus Chriſt my Saviour. *Amen.*

An Evening-Prayer for a Person in Private.

MOST Great and Mighty God! Thou art the sovereign Lord of Heaven and Earth, the Creator and Preserver, and Governor of all Things; Thou dwellest in that Light which no mortal Eye can approach unto, and yet disdainest not to behold the Children of Men: Look down, I beseech thee, upon me thy unworthy Creature, who am come into thy Presence, adoring thy Majesty, and acknowledging that my Dependance is wholly upon thee, who art the Author of my Being, and the Foundation of all my Hopes both here and hereafter.

O Lord, I confess that I am a weak and frail Creature, my Nature is corrupt, and miserable, prone to offend thee; I find a Law in my Members warring against the Law in my Mind, which, I confess with Sorrow, has too often prevail'd against me; the Pleasures and Profits of the World are too apt to dazzle my Eyes, and make me cold and remiss in the great and important Work of my Salvation; I have been guilty of manifold Neglects and Omissions of my

my Duty towards thee, and have not ſerved thee with that Purity of Intention, with that Sincerity of Heart, with that Fervency of Spirit, with that Zeal for thy Glory, with that Care and Diligence, and Conſtancy, that I ought to have done.

O Lord, if thou ſhould'ſt be extream to mark what is done amiſs; if thou ſhould'ſt call me to a ſtrict Account for my Life paſt, what could I ſay unto thee? Or how ſhould I be able to ſtand in thy ſight; if thou ſhould'ſt deal with me as I have deſerv'd, I could expect nothing from thee but the ſeverities of thy Wrath and Diſpleaſure; but, O gracious Father, thou haſt reveal'd thy ſelf to the Sons of Men, to be a God merciful and gracious, forgiving Iniquity, Tranſgreſſion and Sin; remember then, I beſeech thee, thy tender Mercies, which have been ever of Old, and for the Sake and Merits of my Bleſſed Saviour, forgive, I humbly pray thee, all the Sins and Vanities, the Follies and Indiſcretions of my Life paſt; O reſerve not my Sins to be puniſh'd in the Day of thy fierce Wrath and Diſpleaſure, but ſo blot them out of thy Remembrance, that they may never riſe up to my Confuſion here, nor my Condemnation hereafter.

Reform whatever thou ſeeſt amiſs in the Temper and Diſpoſition of my Mind, or in any of the Actions of my Life; and enable me by the Aſſiſtance of thy Grace and Holy Spirit, to love thee more, and ſerve thee better, and to do thy

thy Will with greater Care and Diligence than I have ever yet done.

To that End, keep up in my Mind a lively sense of my Duty towards thee, and of that great Account which I must one Day give; suffer me not, I beseech thee, to fall into a careless and unthinking state, nor to be unmindful of that one Thing needful, the Salvation of my immortal Soul: Make me so sensible of those dreadful Threatnings, which thou hast denounc'd against Sinners, that whatever else I leave undone, I may make it my great Care and Concern, to secure an Interest in thy Favour, by a holy and religious Life. And, O merciful Father, be thou pleased of thy great Goodness, so to assist my weak and feeble Endeavours, that I may not be unsuccessful in Matter of such vast Concern.

Root out of my Heart, O God, by the powerful Efficacy of thy Grace, all sinful and corrupt Affections; wean me from the Vanities and Pleasures of this World, and give me a settled and firm Persuasion of the Uncertainty and Insufficiency of all Things here below. O let me never seek for Rest and Happiness in the Enjoyments of this Life; but grant that I may daily aspire after that eternal and unchangeable state, which thou hast reserv'd for us hereafter, and to which, I beseech thee, of thy infinite Love and Mercy, to bring me and all thy faithful servants, thro' the Merits and for the sake of thy dear Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Exten

Extend thy Mercy, O God, to the whole Race of Mankind: In a more particular manner, I pray thee, to be gracious to theſe ſinful Nations to which I belong; to pardon our great and crying Sins; to avert the Judgments which we have moſt juſtly deſerv'd, and to put away from us the Spirit of Prophaneneſs and Infidelity, of Malice and Uncharitableneſs, that thou mayeſt delight to dwell among us, and mayeſt be our God, and we thy People.

Bleſs and preſerve our ſovereign Lord the King, and grant that all who are in Authority under him, may faithfully endeavour to promote thy Glory, and the Good and Welfare of this Church and Nation.

Look with Pity and Compaſſion upon all thy afflicted Servants: Be a Father to the Fatherleſs, and a Husband to the Widow; heal the Sick; ſupply the Wants of the Poor and Needy; and grant, that whatſoever is wanting to any one of outward Comforts, may be abundantly made up by the inward Conſolations of thy Holy Spirit.

Bleſs all my Friends and Relations eſpecially,—reward all that have done me good, and forgive all that have done or wiſh'd me evil; and vouchſafe to every one of us, from the higheſt to the loweſt, whatever thy great Wiſdom knoweſt to be needful both for our Souls and Bodies.

And now, O merciful Father, out of an humble Senſe of thy great Goodneſs, I adore

and praiſe thy glorious Name for all the Manifeſtations of thy Love and Kindneſs vouchſafed unto me. I bleſs thee for my Being, for my Reaſon, and all the Endowments and Faculties of my Soul and Body; for my Health, Friends, Food and Raiment, and all the other Comforts and Conveniencies of my Life; for thy continual Care and watchful Providence over me through the whole Courſe of my Life; and particularly for the Preſervation and Protection of me this Day paſt.

Give me Grace, I beſeech thee, to make a right Improvement of all thy Bleſſings; and be thou graciouſly pleas'd to take me, and all that belong to me, this Night, under the Care and Protection of thy Fatherly Providence. Give thy holy Angels Charge over us, and grant us ſuch Refreſhments of Soul and Body as may enable us chearfully to go through the Duties of that Station wherein thou haſt plac'd us, and when thou ſhalt be pleas'd to call us out of this World, O let us be found of the Number of thy faithful Servants, through the Merits of my bleſſed Saviour and Redeemer, Jeſus Chriſt, for whom my Soul does bleſs and praiſe thee, and in whoſe moſt holy Words I ſum up all our Wants, ſaying

Our Father, &c.

A Prayer which may be added to the daily Evening-Prayer, on the Lord's Day.

I Again return my moſt humble and hearty Thanks to thee, O Lord my God, for the ſpecial Bleſſings of this thy Holy Day.

That I have been admitted to the great Privilege of joining with thy faithful People in their Aſſemblies for Publick Worſhip; to offer up my Praiſes and Prayers to thy Divine Majeſty, in the Name of our Bleſſed Redeemer; to hear thy holy Word read; and preach'd by the Miniſters of thy Goſpel; and that I have had farther Opportunities for employing my ſelf more privately in thy Worſhip, and the Care of my immortal Soul.

I earneſtly beſeech thee, O Lord, to pardon all the Wanderings and Diſorders of my Mind, and whatſoever elſe thou haſt ſeen amiſs in me, in my Attendance upon thee; and graciouſly to accept my ſincere, tho' weak, Endeavours to ſerve thee.

Cauſe thy Word, which I have heard or read, to abide in my Heart, and to bring forth Fruit in my Life.

Help me, by the Uſe of all the Means of Grace and Salvation, to grow in Grace and in the Knowledge of my Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, fitting me more and more for the ſeeing and enjoying thee my God, and my bleſſed Redeemer in the Life to come: And grant, that when I ſhall ceaſe to praiſe and ſerve thee with thy Saints on Earth, I may continue to be ſo employed with the Bleſſed Spirits in Heaven.

I heartily beg the ſame Bleſſings for all my Fellow Chriſtians, recommending them and my ſelf to thee my Heavenly Father, through Jeſus Chriſt thy Son, our only Mediator and Advocate. *Amen.*

A Morning-Prayer for a Young Perſon.

O Lord, my heavenly Father, I humbly adore thee, as the Maker and Governor of the World, the Author of my Being, the Preſerver of my Life, and the Giver of every good Thing.

I heartily thank thee for the comfortable Reſt which I have enjoy'd the Night paſt, that thou haſt preſerv'd me in Safety, and raiſed me up in Health.

I bleſs thee for all thy Goodneſs to me, ever ſince I came into the World, and, eſpecially, for the Advantages thou haſt given me, for the Inſtruction and Improvement of my Mind in the Knowledge of thee, the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt my Lord.

Grant, O good God! that the Senſe of theſe thy Favours, may ſo deeply affect my Heart, that I may ſhew forth my Thankfulneſs in the whole Courſe of my Life.

I am thine, O Lord, by Creation, by Redemption, by my Baptiſm and Chriſtian Profeſſion, by all the Obligations which thou haſt laid upon me. I deſire to be thine alſo, by a

willing Dedication of my ſelf to thee every Day of my Life, and by a conſtant faithful Endeavour to approve my ſelf to thee.

I beſeech thee, in great Mercy, through the Mediation of my Redeemer, to pardon all my paſt Offences, and to enable me by thy Grace to diſcern and to amend whatſoever is amiſs in me.

Help me ever to remember the Chriſtian Principles which I have learn'd, and the pious Inſtructions which have been given me, and never to depart from that good Way, in which I have been taught to walk.

Incline my Heart to all that is good, that I may be modeſt and humble, true and juſt, temperate and chaſt, reſpectful and obedient to my Superiors, innocent and inoffenſive in my whole Converſation, faithful and diligent in the Diſcharge of the Duties of my Place and Calling; that I may fear and love thee, my God, above all; and may do to all others, as I would they ſhould do unto me.

Make me perfectly contented with my Condition, and thankful to thee, who has given me all things neceſſary for Life and Godlineſs. Let thy good Providence always take care of me, as I deſire to place my Truſt and Confidence in thee.

Take me, I beſeech thee, into thy Protection this Day; keep me, if it be thy good Will, in Health and Safety. Preſerve me from the Vanity of my own Heart, and from the Temptations

tions of the World and the Devil, help me in a Sense of thy constant Presence with me, and of the Account I am to give unto thee, so to govern all my Thoughts, Words and Actions, that I may reflect upon them with Satisfaction at the Close of this Day.

Let thy Blessing be upon every Member of this Family; upon all my Relations and Friends; upon all whom I ought, and whom I desire to pray for.

I humbly commit both my self and them to thee, O my God, in the Name of Jesus Christ my Saviour, and in the Words which he himself hath taught me;

Our Father, &c.

An Evening-Prayer for a Young Perſon.

MOST Gracious God, my Heavenly Father, as I began, ſo I deſire always to end the Day, with Bleſſing thy holy Name, and begging thy Favour.

Honour and Worſhip, Praiſe and Thankſgiving are due to thee from every underſtanding and reaſonable Creature. I heartily bleſs thee, that I am of that Number; and that thou haſt moreover reveal'd thy ſelf to me by thy Son Jeſus Chriſt my Redeemer, and encourag'd me to call upon thee in his Name.

I humbly thank thee for thy daily Care of me, and particularly for that good Providence which hath been over me the Day paſt; that thou haſt preſerv'd me from the many Evils, to which I am juſtly liable; and haſt beſtowed upon me ſo many good Things, which I have not deſerved; eſpecially for whatſoever thou haſt enabled me to do, which is acceptable in thy Sight, and which I can reflect upon with Satisfaction.

I hum-

I humbly bewail, O Lord, the great Weakneſs and Corruption of my Nature, and the many Errors and Tranſgreſſions of my Life. I humbly beg thy Mercy in the Pardon of all my Sins, through the Mediation of my Bleſſed Redeemer; particularly of whatſoever thou haſt ſeen amiſs in me this Day, either in my Thoughts, Words or Actions.

Grant, O Lord, that the Senſe of my Unworthineſs may always keep me humble, Work in me an unfeigned Repentance for all my Sins, and let the Remembrance of them ever excite me to greater Care and Watchfulneſs, Strengthen in me every good Purpoſe and Reſolution. What I Know not, do thou teach me; and wherein I have done Amiſs, help me to do ſo no more.

Leave me not, O Lord, at any Time to my ſelf, nor in the hands of my Spiritual Enemies. Preſerve me from thoſe Circumſtances that would prove a Snare or Temptation to me. Let thy good Spirit continually enlighten and ſanctify my Mind, directing and aſſiſting me through the whole Courſe of my Life.

Fill me with a Senſe of my conſtant and entire Dependance upon thee, that I may always commit my ſelf to thy Care, and be ever ſatisfied with my Diſpoſal.

Teach me ſo to number my Days, that I may apply my Heart to true and Heavenly Wiſdom. Help me to live in a daily Preparation for my great Change, keeping my Conſcience void of

Offences,

Offences, both towards Thee and towards Men; and to be always so employ'd, as I shall wish I had been at the last; that whensoever thou shall think fit to call me out of this World, I may readily and thankfully exchange it for a better.

Take me, I beseech thee, into thy gracious Protection this Night. Preserve me, if it be thy good Will, in Health and Safety, and grant me that Rest which may refresh my Body and dispose me to serve thee chearfully both in Body and Mind the Day ensuing.

I heartily desire the Good of all Mankind, and pray unto thee for the Purity, the Peace and the Enlargement of thy holy Church; for the Direction and Assistance of all its Governors and Pastors, particularly those, under whose Guidance I am plac'd; for the Welfare of my Country; for a Blessing upon the King and all in Authority under him; for the Relief and Comfort of all that are in Affliction; for all my Friends and Relations; beseeching thee to hear and to accept me, and all that call upon thee, in the Name of Jesus Christ our only Lord and Saviour, who hath taught me thus to pray.

Our Father, &c.

FINIS.

THE CONTINUAL PLEASURE OF A Religious LIFE.

CHAP. I.

The true Motion of Pleasure stated.

NOTHING so frequently prejudices Men against a good Life as the frightful Imaginations they have entertain'd concerning the severe Discipline that necessarily attends it.

They imagine that if they once consent to become Religious, they from that very instant bid adieu to all that is pleasant and agreeable; and give themselves henceforward intirely up to austere and constant Labours.

Upon which Account it is that they stop their Ears to the Charmer, charm he never so wisely, and the justest Descriptions of Virtue have little or no Influence on them. For

For under this Prepossession they look upon them as fallacious Arguments to decoy and cheat the Credulous. Wherefore till this Mistake be rectified we are fixed in our Sins, and can have little Prospect of Deliverance from the Slavery of them.

But when once we begin to see that Pleasure is no such inconsistent Thing with Virtue, as our own Fancies have often represented it: when once our own Experience can testify that on the contrary Goodness reaches out to us the most substantial Comforts, that each good Action has a Power to refresh and bless us, then we shall be ready for Conviction, prepared for the Side of Religion, and easily won to the Practice of it.

Now if we consult either our own Reason or the revealed Will of God, they both agree in this; that tho' some Difficulties are to be conquer'd, tho' our Sinful Lusts and unruly Passions are to be subdued, tho' Virtues to which we are accustomed are to be gained, and so the Gate becomes strait and the Way narrow; yet for all this the Practice of Religion is very pleasant.

It is pleasant, as best suited to the refined Sensations of an intellectual Being, and not utterly irreconcileable with the grosser Perceptions of our Body so far as they are innocent and lawful; which is as far as they can be called pleasant too, all beyond being nauseous and unnatural; so far highly consistent with them

they

they are, not interrupted, but in ſeveral Reſpects heightn'd by them. In order to make this plain, I ſhall enquire,

1. What the true Notion of Pleaſure is.
2. How the Ways of Religion are pleaſant.

Firſt, *What the true Notion of Pleaſure is.* For 'tis obvious that many are quite out in their Apprehenſions of it. Whilſt ſome make it the ſame with Beaſtiality and Voluptuouſneſs, others place it in empty Speculation, and not a few according to their depraved Humours, in growing rich and great.

But had ſuch Perſons a right Notion of Pleaſure in its due Extent and Latitude, had they been thoroughly informed wherein it conſiſts and how it operates, they would have ſought for it ſomewhere elſe, in ſomething more compleat and laſting, more adapted to their Nature, and ſo in Reality more pleaſant and delightful.

Whereas conſulting no other Guide beſides thoſe blind undiſcerning ones their Senſes, they pitch upon wrong Objects, which humane Nature without being debaſed, and inured to by Cuſtom, can have little reliſh in

'Tis certain that our Souls are deſigned for higher joys than any here below, too capacious in their Deſires and Aſpirations, of too pure an Eſſence to be confined to the limited, imperfect Satisfactions of Senſe; that tho' they fall vaſtly ſhort of their original native Purity, yet retain (while uncorrupted) ſtrong Deſires after it, and ſo will not be bowed down

to earthly Pleaſures, nor wholly poſſeſs'd by them, unleſs Conſtraint and Cuſtom prevail againſt them.

Thoſe that take no Delight in the Service of God and virtuous Actions, that delight in almoſt every thing beſides, are to be eſteemed of as miſled, perverted Wretches, that have been at great Pains, and beſtowed much Art to bring themſelves to a wrong Taſte, and have in the End accompliſhed it.

'Tis very wonderful to obſerve what Variety there is in People's Pleaſure, not only in different People, but in the ſame Man; how the chief, the ſole Pleaſure of one Perſon is the ſettled Averſion of another; how what juſt now we are delighted with, by and by we hate and loath; what now we dread and avoid, afterwards we eagerly proſecute and deſire. Whence we may collect that by Time and Uſe, Men are brought to like what they ought not, and to diſlike what they ought.

And if we enquire how it comes to paſs, it ſeems to proceed from a wrong Judgment of the Nature of Pleaſure, which is placed chiefly in the Mind, becauſe by Virtue of that alone it is that we are capable of any manner of Senſe and ſo of all Degrees of Pleaſure too.

The Body without this is a lifeleſs, inſenſible Lump, not affected with either Pain or Pleaſure, void of Action and of Suffering; intirely diveſted of all Excellence, and reduced to the Level of a Block or Stone. But when actuated

actuated by the Soul, that immortal thinking Principle, then it assumes quite other Perfections, and is enabled to share in what it enjoys, as well as to bear a part in what it feels.

Here we are to take a View of Pleasure, which upon the Residence of this heavenly Guest in our earthly Tabernacles; appears to be no more than an Apprehension of something suitable; suitable I mean to our first unbyass'd Nature, not to the Corruptions contracted by Sin.

And this Suitableness is of two Sorts, belonging either to our Bodies or to our Minds. For tho', as I observed, the Soul by the Source of all Pleasures, as 'tis the Seat of Perception, and so in that Sense all Pleasure may be attributed to it, as all is derived from it; yet some Pleasures in the Soul being the Result of innocently gratifying our bodily Senses, others having a more immediate Relation to the Powers and Faculties of our Minds, they may very well be thus distinguished.

The true Notion of Pleasure therefore is a grateful easie Sense arising from the right Application of proper Objects to their respective Organs, or from a just Repesentation of Truth to the Understanding, or a right Choice of Good in the Will.

All this is pleasant for no other Cause but as 'tis natural; 'tis true and real Pleasure as 'tis estimated by unprejudiced Judges, not perverted by length of Time, or by familiar Use, which

make light the heaviest Burthens, and render the most odious and unpalatable Exercises, in the Eyes of those who practise them, amiable and delightful.

The general Notion of Pleasure being briefly settled, we are to consider a little what it is we aim at, when we would determine concerning the Pleasantness or the Troubles of a Course of Life.

The Sinner says his Ways, the Ways of Sin and Folly, are the only pleasant Ways, and frankly owns 'tis upon that Account he chuses them. He does not love to abridge himself of any Pleasures, and so hates the Doctrine that forbids them.

On the other hand the Good in all Ages have from Experience affirmed, and the Scriptures pronounce the Ways of Religion and Virtue to be the Ways of Pleasure; the Ways of Irreligion and Prophaneness to be not only in the End Ways of Death, but in the mean time Ways of Uneasiness and Disquiet.

There is no sure Method of discovering the Truth of these contradictory Pretensions, but by examining into the proper meaning of Pleasant and Unpleasant, as applied on this Occasion; which I shall explain in two Observations.

1st. When we say such a Course of Life or such Ways are pleasant and such others unpleasant, we do not mean that either of them are absolutely so unalloy'd, that the one has no Comforts, the other no Troubles attending it

For

For while on Earth we muſt expect a Mixture of Good and Evil promiſcuouſly blended in all Conditions of Life, without being exempted from Misfortunes, or cloy'd with Succeſſes.

Wicked Men may perhaps expect perfect Happineſs from the Ways of Sin, imagine them to be ſecurity from all Dangers, and wholly made up of Joys and Pleaſures; but a little Experience will ſoon convince them of their Error, and (one would think) ſhould oblige them to retreat when they perceive they are impoſed upon.

Thoſe who engage in a Courſe of Virtue do not in the leaſt ſuppoſe that they ſhall meet with no Tryals, nothing unacceptable and unpleaſant to them; rather they are aſſured of, and prepare againſt Difficulties.

The Pleaſures they look for from *Religion*, tho' they be the higheſt, nobleſt Pleaſures, yet are only imperfect and accompanied with much Regret and Sorrow.

This Negative Notion of a pleaſant Way is confirmed by the Obſervation of almoſt every Hour of our Lives, in which a good Man feels ſomething of the Sweets of Piety, and is always ſenſible of the Labours and Adverſity that the beſt of Saints have undergone in the ſteady Practice of it.

As to the Pleaſures of the *Body*, ſuch as our Senſes miniſter, theſe are the Pleaſures

that the Sinner boaſts of; but then we are to remember, that he can't poſſibly even in his own Way be conſtantly ſupplied by them.

For not to mention the neceſſary Abſence of Objects to be enjoyed, or of Appetite to enjoy, which are conſiderable Diminutions of the Epicure's Happineſs, and the Repetition and Continuance of them change their very Natures, and turn them into mere Loathſomneſs and Abhorrence.

So that if the Sinner was never deprived of Opportunities to gratify and indulge all his five Senſes together; allowing he could command the Univerſe for his Pleaſures, he would not nevertheleſs be abſolutely free from Grief and Pain, by reaſon of his Delights in the end proving ſuch to him.

Then as to the Pleaſures of the *Mind*, the Wicked has hardly any thought of theſe: However the Troubles of it are what he can't be unacquainted with; nothing ſo diſturbing his Repoſe in the midſt of Luxury and ſenſual Delights, as the Clamours and Oppoſition of a guilty Conſcience.

Thus we ſee how ridiculous it is for the *Wicked*, eſpecially under ſo many Diſadvantages, to talk of his Ways being all pleaſant and eaſy.

'Tis true of the *Righteous* too, who tho' their Eſtate in this Reſpect be infinitely preferable to the others; tho' it be really laſtingly pleaſant, (as I ſhall ſhew by and by) yet 'tis by no means

means compleatly ſo, being only begun here, and to be conſummated hereafter. Which brings me to the

2*d* Obſervation, upon what we mean when we ſay ſuch a Courſe of Living is pleaſant, and ſuch an one is not ſo. That we do not mean it in either Caſe *abſolutely*, as tho' nothing of the one were to be found in the other, both unmix'd and perfect, has been proved already; from whence we may gather,

2*dly*, That theſe Expreſſions are only meant *comparatively*, ſo as to denote that the Pleaſures of the one are more delightful, or more certain than the Pleaſures of the other.

That whereas the Ways of ſin are full of Trouble, debarring us the divine Pleaſure of our better Part, and bringing upon us the Miſeries and Confuſions of it, which are beyond all bodily Pain, the Ways of Religion have the inexpreſſible Comforts of an appeaſed God and a good Mind.

Whereas the one places his full Hopes and Expectations in the mutable, unſatisfying, diſhonourable Gratifications of his Senſes, in oppoſition to the Laws of Reaſon and Religion; the other poſſeſſes all the innocent, lawful (and therefore all the valuable and pleaſant) Enjoyments of Senſe, without the Reluctancy and Horror of his Conſcience, and with the Approbation, the triumphant glorious Applauſes of a well inform'd Guide.

Since

Since then no such thing as pure, untainted Pleasure is any where to be met with; since Virtue and Vice have both of them some Alloy, our Business is only by the sure Rules of natural and revealed Light, attested and confirmed by our own and others Experience, to determine in Favour of that Side, which with Regard to the Ease and Pleasure of both Body and Mind is best fitted for us.

The wicked in this Choice reflects but little, just imagines a sinful Course of Life to allow him greatest Liberty to please his Senses; and so without going further to the Pleasures of the Mind, or deeply searching into those of the Body, he blindly engages in a wrong Cause, and having no Notion of the Satisfactions of the Man, he confines himself to the Delights of a Beast.

Hitherto of the true Notion of Pleasure, which I have endeavoured to rescue from the unjust, irrational Interpretations of Sensualists, who restrain it altogether to the lower sordid Delights of Flesh, and having likewise applied this to the present Subject, by shewing in what Sense a Way or Course of living may be judged pleasant or unpleasant; I should proceed to the

Second General proposed, *viz.* To enquire how the Ways of Religion are Ways of Pleasantness, of which in the next Chapter.

CHAP.

Chap. II.

A serious Enquiry how the Ways of Religion are the Ways of Pleasantness.

HAving given a general Notion of Pleasure in the foregoing Chapter, I proceed to the *Second* Head, namely to enquire *how the Ways of Religion are Ways of Pleasantness*; where I shall speak *1st*, of the Pleasures of *Sense*; *2dly*, of the Pleasures of the *Mind*; And *3dly*, of the *Consistency of both these together.*

1st, *For the Pleasures of Sense.* Perhaps it may seem a little odd to place these amongst religious Pleasures; but if we consider that they are by no means forbidden us by Religion, we may and ought in a fair State of Things to take them into the Account, inasmuch as one great Advantage is, that tho' the unrighteous are utterly insensible of the Joys and Comforts of Virtue, and are without all Share in them; yet the Good Man enjoys his full Portion of the other Pleasures, as much of them as he need desire; or can in reason wish for.

When we engage ourselves in the Service of God (which is perfect Freedom) we are not under any obligation to withdraw intirely from the

the World; without ever converſing amongſt our Fellow Creatures, and enjoying the Benefits and the innocent Amuſements of Society.

The World is not renounced in Baptiſm, but the Pomps and Vanities, the Sins and Follies of it. Theſe we are conſtantly to make head againſt. Here lies our Strife; this is our Chriſtian Warfare. We are not called to retreat, but to fight; not to ſhun the Adverſary, but to reſiſt and overcome him.

And this Conqueſt is not to be made over our Senſes, but only over their unreaſonable and extravagant Demands, when they would go beyond their Bounds, incline us to do Evil, or hinder us from doing good, then we are to recall, and check them; but within their Limits they may always innocently and for the moſt part ſafely be complyed with.

The Eye and Ear may be entertain'd with a vaſt Variety of Objects that have no Tendency to Evil, that rather promote our Good; and Religion is far from denying them this Entertainment, which is as ſatisfactory to Men of Virtue as to the moſt vitious Wretch, whoſe whole Happineſs is placed therein.

And the ſame is equally true of all the Delights and Pleaſures that we receive from our Senſes, conſider'd either by our ſelves alone, or in Society with other People. They are only regulated by Religion, not extirpated by it; and the Regulation is ſo mild and eaſy, that it

it cuts off nothing but the Excreſcences, the ſuperfluous wieldy Parts of Pleaſure, or elſe ſuch parts as on other Accounts would prove prejudicial to us, leaving untouch'd the Pith and Kernel of them, permitting us freely to participate of the pure Stream ſeparated from the Impurities and Filth that moleſt the wicked.

And here I might deſcend to particular Inſtances, and ſhew in all the ſeveral Pleaſures of human Life, that the virtuous and well-diſpoſed Chriſtians loſe nothing of the Force and Spirit of them, that he has all that the greateſt Maſters of Voluptuouſneſs can pretend to value in them.

I confeſs good Conduct and exact Management is required to avoid being overtaken (whilſt we allow our ſelves the Pleaſures of the World) by the Corruptions that cleave to them.

This has appeared ſo nice a Task, that many have rather choſen to abandon human Society, than to be ſo continually alarmed with the ſpiritual Dangers they are expos'd to in it.

However, methinks this muſt be granted, that he is more heroick that baffles ſuch potent Enemies (and they can never ſtand it out againſt our ſincere Endeavours and the Grace of God aſſiſting them) than he that diſtruſting *both* theſe, flyes to Rocks and Caves of the Earth, or to the equally ſilent Receſſes of Cloiſters and Monaſteries for ſhelter.

2*dly*,

2*dly*, We are next to view the *Pleaſures of the Mind*, which we may venture to call the religious Man's Propriety; for the nobleſt and moſt elevated Pleaſures of the Soul are what belong to none beſides, what the wicked have no manner of Title to.

And here ſure I need not go about to prove that the immortal Principle of Life and Reaſon within us is capable of being ſatisfied and pleaſed, to the full as capable as the *Body* is, or rather much more ſo, as the *Body* without this, has no Perception; I ſay I may, 'tis to be hoped, preſume there is little Neceſſity for Proof of this, which even the moſt deſperate Sinner (if his Underſtanding be not as much darken'd as his Will is vitious) can't but agree to.

When his Projects ſucceed, when Things go well with him, he muſt perceive his Mind ſomething eaſy and lightſome, leſs dejected with Deſpair and Melancholy, and more above the diſtracting Thoughts of what ſhall be hereafter.

So every one is furniſhed with the beſt of Arguments, Experience; every one has a ſort of Glimpſe, a rude imperfect Knowledge, a diſtant confuſed View of thoſe divine Repaſts that the good Chriſtian feeds upon, and which nothing but a pious Life can give us poſſeſſion of.

A confuſed View indeed it is, the Joys and Delights of Religion being inexpreſſibly greater and more glorious than can be conceived by thoſe who do not feel them, or expreſſed

and

and described by those who do: And if the Shadow be so pleasing, Lord! how ravishing and transporting must the Substance be?

But to shew more fully the Pleasures that Religion affords the Mind, we must take Notice that they depend upon two Things.

1*st*, The Disposition and due Qualifications of the Subject. And

2*dly*, The Nature and Degrees of the Object.

First, The Pleasures of the Mind depend extremely upon *the right Disposition of all its Faculties, and the due Qualifications of them.* When these are out of Order, there is no Admittance for Pleasure, tho' we were caress'd with all the choicest Things imaginable.

The Root of all our Disorders in Mind is Sin. This confounds and perplexes the Understanding, corrupts and prejudices the Will, and lets loose, like so many fierce ungovern'd Monsters, all our Passions.

In such an universal Hurry, such preternatural Flames and Tumults, the Soul is utterly incapacitated for Pleasures, and wholly given up to Pain and Grief.

This makes it impossible for the wicked to enjoy any settled Peace: This makes them toss to and fro like the Waves of the Sea, and cast up perpetual Filth and Mire. They have indeed some Portion of the Pleasures of the Virtuous, the Pleasures of Sense; but the Uneasiness of their Minds turns all their boasted Liberty and Range of Licentiousness into Confusion and In-

quietude, and thereby puts them much behind the *Religious* in those very Delights, in which alone, they can pretend to have the Advantage of them.

I pray what can comfort us when the Mind is disconsolate? How insipid are the best Enjoyments to a wounded Spirit? When this darts its bitter Arrows, what can guard off the Blow or relieve the Patient? How helpless and miserable are those who endure the Rage and Agonies of a reproving angry Conscience?

On the contrary, how joyful and blessed must their Condition be who have a Mind always ready to receive Happiness, who by keeping all the Faculties of their Souls cleansed and garnished, not polluted or inraged by Sin, are exactly qualified for the Pleasures, the abject lower Pleasures of their Senses, and for the better and more proper manly Pleasures of the Mind? How must this Felicity be increased, if we remember, that as they have a Soul regulated for these Purposes, and therefore want no Disposition in the Subject, so likewise they have *Objects of the purest Nature*, in the highest Degrees proportionable to the Soul, and best adapted to the noblest Pleasures of it? Which was the second Thing I observed, the Pleasures of our Minds depended on.

God and his propitious Providence; the mysterious Dispensations of unerring Justice, reconciled with condescending Mercy; the stupenduous Effects of omnipotent Power and all-

knowing

knowing Wiſdom in the Creation of Heaven, with the Hoſts thereof above, and of Earth and all Things here below, are Themes of unfathomable Extent, where the Underſtanding will find Store of Matter freſh and ſublime, to be for ever employ'd upon; where the good Man's Underſtanding, who at a great diſtance reveres what none of the Angels comprehend, will abound and overflow with tremenduous Awe and raviſhing Admiration.

With what Contempt will he look from theſe delightful Heights upon the moſt ſhining Proffers that the World can make him? What will he think of the Stupidity of earthly-minded Men, who confine themſelves to ſuch poor fleeting beggarly Entertainments, and never raiſe their Souls to their proper deſigned Objects, or elſe by reaſon of Guilt, find nothing but Horror and Conſternation in them?

Such and innumerable more are the Pleaſures that Religion furniſhes our Underſtandings with, while it raiſes that preſiding Faculty of our Natures above the mean and inſignificant Objects of this World, which the wicked ſpend all their Thoughts about, as if they had been created meer Earth-worms, only to dig and toil for Nouriſhment.

There is another Advantage too, with which Religion is attended, the Enlightening of the *Underſtanding*, by the Bleſſing of God, upon our own Induſtry, if not as ſome have ima-

gin'd) by his more immediate Influence in Caſes of extreme Urgency.

By keeping God's Teſtimonies, it was that *David grew wiſer than the Aged*; wiſer than his moſt ſubtle Enemies. And he who ſhall obſerve what Trouble the Darkneſs and Ignorance of our Minds produces, how anxious and perplexed they render us, will eaſily allow that the being directed by ſure and immovable Maxims of Truth plainly laid before us, and the having moreover a firm Aſſurance of divine Aids in all greater Emergencies, muſt needs be wondrous pleaſant, free us from much Diſquietude of Thought, and much Folly and Sin in Action.

Then for the *Will*, that is made eaſy by attaining its full Happineſs by Religion, which keeps it (as was before hinted) upright and unbiaſs'd, and gives it ſuch ſort of Objects, and the higheſt Meaſures of them, as it deſires and wiſhes for.

Truth belongs to the *Underſtanding*, and *Good* and *Evil* to the *Will*. The *Will* acquieſces in, and is pleaſed with *Good*; is highly exaſperated and diſpleaſed with *Evil*. I ſhall only now treat of *Moral* Good and Evil, and ſhew how the Ways of Religion are pleaſant with reſpect to *that*.

Mr. *Hobbs* has advanced with wonted Aſſurance, the Foundation of Good and Evil to be no lower laid than the Cuſtoms or Conſtitutions of a Country. But 'tis ſtrange that he who

who had Cunning enough to diſcover ſo ſublime a Truth, ſhould never be able to teach the Practice of it. With all his Artifice and deep Reſearches he could not alter the old Courſe, could not make the leaſt Evil, though ſecret and undetected, pleaſing to the Mind; nor the leaſt Good, though remote and unſeen, unacceptable to it. Good and Evil were ſtill eſtabliſh'd, ſtill the one was cloſed with by the Will, and pleaſed it, the other in its Eſteem was ſtill odious. And ſure that's an inveterate Cuſtom indeed, that not the united Forces of Nature, aſſiſted by Mr. *Hobbs*'s demonſtrable Rules of Reaſon could ever gain Ground againſt it. To be ſure if 'twas only a Cuſtom to be pleaſed with Good, ſome forward Sparks, that are above Tradition, and ſcorn Confinement, would one time or other have withſtood it. And no one having ever yet, through a long Series of Generations, been able to do ſo, we conclude none ever will, which inclines us to think it impoſſible any ever ſhould, becauſe the Nature of Things is on the other Side.

'Tis natural for the Will to be delighted and taken with good Actions; to be diſcompoſed, affrighten'd and amazed at evil ones. This Pleaſure is either antecedent to the Action, and is felt in thinking and contriving how to do good, or ſubſequent to it, and is known by the Comforts of reflecting on it when done.

Both theſe, I hope, we all know to be more than imaginary Delights; to be real ſolid Joys,

ſuch as the Worldling has little ſhare in, and ſuch as infinitely excel his ſtudied cloying Arts of Refreſhment and Diverſion.

O how raviſhing, how tranſporting are the Thoughts of one Day well ſpent! (and I moſt heartily recommend to your Peruſal a ſmall Paper, intitul'd, *The Way to ſpend one Day well*) How comfortable are the Reflections of having employ'd a ſingle Hour in Offices of Piety and Mercy?

" In Time of Affliction, Old Age, or at the " Approach of Death, the Remembrance of " our good and charitable Deeds will ſtrangely " chear and ſupport our Spirits under all the " Calamities and Troubles we may meet with " in this State. When this World and the Fa- " ſhion of it is vaniſhed and gone; when the " Pangs of Death are juſt taking hold of us, " and we are ready to ſtep into another World; " what a ſeaſonable and comfortable Refreſh- " ment then will it be to look back upon a " well ſpent Life, to conſider with our ſelves " how faithfully we have improved thoſe Ta- " lents God hath intruſted us with, how well " we have husbanded our Time, Eſtates, Parts, " Reputation, Learning, and Authority for the " Glory of God, and the Good of Mankind? " Nay further, our good Works will appear " and plead for us before God's Tribunal, and " will procure us for the ſake of Jeſus Chriſt, " at the hands of our merciful God, a glorious " Recompence at the Reſurrection of the Juſt.

Nor

Nor are the Paſſions, thoſe uſual Diſturbers of our Eaſe (if govern'd as they ought and as the good Man governs them) leſs pleaſant and delightful than the Underſtanding and the Will.

LOVE, when placed on God is a moſt ſweet and comfortable Thing; has infinitely more of the Charms of Love here below, without any of the Diſappointments or Croſſes of it.

FEAR, that among Men is often groundleſs, ſeldom otherwiſe than raſh and impetuous; when it has a merciful Father for its Object, is ſedate and calm, compoſed and gentle, and yields rare unſpeakable Delights, tho' attended with an holy Awe, which to many ſeems inconſiſtent with Pleaſure. This agrees likewiſe to all the other Paſſions, which would take up a great deal of Time to go through particularly.

Before I proceed to ſpeak of the good Agreement betwixt the Pleaſures of the Body and the Mind as tempered by Religion, I can't forbear beſeeching you to ſtop a little, and admire the divine Harmony of the Soul, where the *Underſtanding* is reſcued from Error and Ignorance; where the *Will* is pliant, and the *Paſſions* generous.

Harmony ſo noble, that were it to be attain'd in Perfection here, we could deſire, and ſhould hardly want another Heaven hereafter. 'Tis Heaven, at leaſt the beſt and moſt perfect Emblem here on Earth. 'Tis what the moſt knowing Heathens directed their Endeavours to, but all their Endeavours could never obtain it.

A Chriſtian in a great Degree may by Vertue of God's bleſſed Spirit concurring with his own ſincere Endeavours, out-go the wiſeſt Philoſophy, make greater Progreſs towards Man's ſupreme Happineſs than ever the admired Profeſſors of Wiſdom after all their Toil and Study could pretend to. For alas! their Rules were ſublime and excellent, but never could be put in Practice; they were above the Sphere of human Power, and calculated for ſome higher unbodied Being than for poor degenerate Man. Thus much of the Pleaſures of both *Body* and *Mind*, I come now in the

Third and *Laſt* Place, to take a tranſient View of *the Conſiſtency of them*, which we ſhall perceive to be an Addition (and a very conſiderable one) to the Pleaſantneſs of Religion.

Man being made up of two equally eſſential (tho' not equally noble) Parts, he can't be happy without poſſeſſing the Perfections of both. Our Bodies are to be raiſed incorruptible and immortal, that we may be compleatly happy in the *better* World; by reaſon of the many unavoidable Decays and Failures, the many Caſualties which we are expoſed to, 'tis impoſſible we ſhould be ſo in *this*.

However, we are not looking here for abſolute entire Pleaſure, ſuch belonging only to the bleſſed Inhabitants of the *New Jeruſalem*, but for the higheſt and moſt ſubſtantial Pleaſures that we can arrive at in this earthly Pilgrimage. Theſe we affirm to be evidently found in a *Religious*

ligious Life, as on the foregoing Accounts, ſo likewiſe on this, that the Pleaſures of the Body in a good Man are heighten'd and improved by the Peaceableneſs and Serenity of his Soul, and that the Innocency and Delights of the Mind make us at leiſure for the Enjoyments of the Body, and capable of reliſhing them.

The terrible Reverſe of all this is true of the wicked Man: He is fretted and diſcompoſed within, and therefore nothing of theſe outward Objects (which are ſo ſweet and pleaſing, and comfortable to the Religious) can much affect him; his very Senſuality has a deep Mixture of Gall and Bitterneſs, and of the Terrors of the Almighty.

For when the Soul is uneaſy (and Sin always makes it ſo) the whole Frame is out of order, and no earthly Delights can bring Relief or Succour to it. But when that is our Friend and ſpeaks Peace and Joy, then we are fitted for the moſt refined Senſations of the Body, and in a Condition of being happy without them. The Conſiſtency therefore of the Pleaſures of the Body and Mind is a mighty Increaſe of the virtuous Perſon's Proſperity, and makes the Ways of Religion the moſt pleaſant and delightful Ways that can be thought of.

I have now done with what I at firſt propoſed to treat of, having ſhewed how and in what Senſe the Ways of *Religion* are Ways of Pleaſantneſs. They do not will us to hang down our Heads like a Bulruſh, nor doom us to an abſurd

abſurd and perpetual Melancholy. No, they are ſo far from abridging, that they rather heighten and increaſe our Pleaſure.

They are not abſolutely and intirely pleaſant; however, that is no Diſadvantage, becauſe abſolute and intire Pleaſure is no where to be met with in this World.

Yet they are infinitely more pleaſant than the Ways of Sin, that even in their boaſted Excellencies of bodily Pleaſures they far out-do them.

That the Pleaſures of the Mind are enjoy'd by good Chriſtians to the full, as *Religion* has duly qualified them for them, and affords Objects, ſuitable noble Objects for the Entertainment of them.

Finally, if we reflect on the nice Temperature that *Religion* makes of theſe two ſeemingly oppoſite Pleaſures, they both meet to pleaſe and ſatisfy thoſe that walk in the Ways of Virtue.

I conclude the whole with obſerving one requiſite Condition to make the Ways of *Religion* (which we have ſhewn to be in themſelves pleaſant) to be ſo to us, *viz.* that *we be very conſtant, and go on with all imaginable Application in the Purſuit of Virtue.*

The Sinner does not pretend that Novices and young Beginners in the Trade of Vice, ſhall reliſh the Satisfactions of it. Time and Diligence will wear off, ſay they, ſome fooliſh little Prejudices that will at firſt moleſt you.

But we know this is all Deluſion; yet it affords us this uſeful Leſſon, that what is mer-

Pre

Pretence there, is in the Ways of Religion more plainly verified. For ſome Difficulties and Unwillingneſs of the Fleſh are to be ſtruggled with e're we come to taſte the divine Joys of doing well. It calls for an earneſt uninterrupted Proſecution; the faint and languiſhing Efforts of the Inconſtant and Lazy, can never make us ſenſible that the Ways of Religion are Ways of Pleaſantneſs; ſuch will account them tedious and intolerable. " But if we would take Pains " to inure and accuſtom our ſelves to religious " Acts, we ſhould find by Degrees they would " grow natural and eaſy to us, and our Souls " would be ſo habituated and diſpoſed to them, " that we ſhould upon all Occaſions exert them " with greateſt Freedom and Inlargement. And " then we ſhould begin to feel and reliſh the " Pleaſure of them, and in every vigorous Ex" erciſe of every Virtue of religious Life, we " ſhould have ſuch lively Foretaſtes of the ce" leſtial Happineſs as would continually excite " us to exerciſe them more vigorouſly, and ſtill " the more vigorouſly we exerted them, the " more of Heaven we ſhould taſte in them; " and ſo the Vigour of our Virtue would in" creaſe the Pleaſure of it, and the Pleaſure of " it increaſe its Vigour, till both are perfected " and grown up into the bleſſed State of Hea" ven. Wherefore as we love Pleaſure, which " is the greateſt Invitation to Action, let us be " Perſuaded once for all to make a thro' Expe" riment of a religious Life; let us comform

" our

" our spiritual Faculties to the heavenly State,
" and set our Affections on things above. Let
" us be frequently contemplating and loving,
" praising and adoring the most high God; let
" us be continually endeavouring to imitate
" his Perfections, subjecting our selves to his
" blessed Will, and always depending on his
" propitious Providence, neither terrified by
" the Apprehension of Dangers, nor the Assu-
" rance of Temptations; but let us aim at a
" noble Emulation of the Pleasures of good
" Men in the future State, and study to come
" as nigh as we can to them in the present, that
" so at length we may be made meet Partakers
" of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light,
" and there behold the Face of God, and be
" for ever with the Lord Jesus Christ, in
" whose *Presence is Fulness of Joy, and at whose*
" *Right Hand there are Pleasures for evermore.*

A Devout Prayer for the continual Pleaſure of a Religious Life.

MOST Bleſſed God, and our moſt kind and gracious Father, thou art great in thy Being, and glorious in thy Bounty, and for Mercy and Kindneſs to the Children of Men there is none like thee. O let thy Mercy forgive our Offences and cover all our Sins, and let thy manifold and ineſtimable Favours raiſe us to ſuch Love and Admiration of thee, as may make us ſtrive after Likeneſs and Conformity to thee, as may move us to ſhun whatever offends thee, and to chuſe and proſecute all ſuch Things as are pleaſing to thee.

Grievous, O Lord, have our Miſcarriages been both for their Multitudes and odious Nature. And (bleſſed be thy Goodneſs) we have ſome Senſe of them. O that we had a quicker and deeper ſtill, even ſuch as might cauſe us ſo to diſreliſh them, as inſtantly, perfectly, and eternally to forſake them.

And then, O God, without whom we can do juſt nothing that we ſhould; work in us both to will and to do, what thou would'ſt have us; that ſo whatever we have been, and whatever we have done, for the time paſt, we may from henceforth be thine, and do thy bleſſed Will for ever.

And O! that the Remembrance of our former Defects might now excite us to greater Diligence, and engage us to purſue our neglected Intereſts with double Earneſtneſs, that ſo we may never again be ſlothful in Buſineſs (that one moſt neceſſary Buſineſs of Religion) but fervent in Spirit ſerving the Lord.

And let us not only count thy Service our Duty; but (as indeed it is) our Privilege alſo, and our Happineſs. And let it be our daily Aim and Endeavour, not only to learn and perform thy Will; but to do it with holy Chearfulneſs and Alacrity. Let us find as great, and much greater complacence and Satisfaction in ſerving thee, than ever we have done in ſinning againſt thee; that ſo thy Ways may be Ways of Pleaſantneſs to us, and thy Paths Peace; and we may never be weary of walking in them.

Naturalize the Works of Religion to us, that thy Yoke may be eaſy, and thy Burthen light; that we may conſtantly run the Ways of thy Commandments, and delight to do thy Will. O God, who art a ſure and liberal Rewarder of them that diligently ſeek, and heartily ſerve thee. For thou haſt ſaid, that thou giveſt Grace, and thou wilt give Glory, and no good thing doſt thou with-hold from them that live uprightly, and that in due Seaſon we ſhall reap if we faint not; and if we be faithful unto Death, thou wilt give us a Crown of Life.

O! let us duly conſider theſe things, and there let our Thoughts continually dwell; that having

having respect unto the present Advantage, and the mighty and eternal Recompence, we may not be weary and faint in our Minds; but have our Powers and Faculties continually exercised in thy Service, which is perfect Freedom.

And, O thou, who art the God of all Grace, and the Author and Giver of every good and perfect Gift, set our very Hearts against all Unrighteousness, and infuse all holy Principles and dispositions into us. Make us holy in our Souls, and holy in our Bodies; make us holy in our Thoughts, and holy in our Words, and holy in our Actions, and all our Conversation. Upon all that we have and all that we are, and all that we can possibly be or do, let there be written Holiness to the Lord; that so we may become Followers of God as dear Children, being holy as thou art holy, and merciful as thou art merciful, and every way true, tho' imperfect Copies of thy glorious Perfections.

For which End elevate our Minds, we humbly beseech thee, above the Concerns of this lower Life, and settle our Affections immoveably on thy self, who art the proper and only fit Object of our Souls, alone able to fill and satisfy their vast Capacities. The older we grow, the more holy let us be, and the nearer and nearer let us draw unto thy self; that so our Dependance may be on thee, and our Converse with thee, and our Desires after thee, and all our Delight and Happiness in thee as long as we live in this World. And when the time shall come

that our Bodies muſt die, Lord Jeſus receive our Spirits, even into thy Father's Preſence, where is Fulneſs of Joy and eternal Pleaſures, and aſſign us a Place at his right Hand, where all Tears ſhall be wiped from our Eyes, and Sin and Miſery ſhall be no more, and where it ſhall be our ſweet, and bleſſed, and everlaſting Employment to laud and glorify thee in ſuch delightful Extaſies of Love and Joy, as will there be endleſs and unſpeakable.

Hear us, O God, for the holy Jeſus his ſake, in whoſe heavenly Words we commend ourſelves, and all our Wants, and thy whole Church to thy infinite Mercy, ſaying,

Our Father, &c.

FINIS.

FORMS
OF
PRAYER,

Proper to be Uſed

Before, At, and After

The Receiving of the

Holy Sacrament,

Some of which may be fitly made Uſe of upon other Occaſions.

The Sixth Edition, Corrected and Enlarged.

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The PREFACE.

AMong the many Endeavours *that have been uſed to check the* Impieties *of the preſent Age, there is nothing, perhaps, has been found more ſucceſsful, than the diſperſing thoſe* Excellent *Tracts, that have been written of late Years by ſeveral worthy Members of our* Church, *who laying aſide unneceſſary* Speculations, *and what St.* Paul *calls* Vain Janglings, *have out of a* Zeal *for the Glory of God, and the Good of Souls, employed their Time and Pains in writing* Practical *and* Uſeful *Treatiſes, which having been ſcatter'd up and down in great Numbers by Perſons* Charitably *diſpos'd, God has been pleas'd to bleſs the* Seed ſown, *and there is great Reaſon to believe, that in time it may produce a very* plentiful Crop.

The Compoſer of theſe Prayers, animated (we will not ſay) with an equal *Zeal, but with as* ſincere *a Deſire to* promote *the Intereſt of Religion, has flung in his* Mite, *in hopes that theſe Prayers may fall into the Hands of* ſome *People, that may find a real* Benefit *and* Advantage *by them.*

It is not intended that this little Manual *ſhould any ways* interfere *with the* Publick *Prayers, or* derogate *in the leaſt from our* Excellent Liturgy, *every part of which is ſo admirably ſuited to the Purpoſes of Religion, that perhaps it will be no* Digreſſion *from Truth to ſay (notwithſtanding the cold Reception* our Service *has met with from*

ſome

ſome Men, through their unhappy Prejudices *and* Miſtakes) *that* better Prayers have not yet been thought of; *but what is chiefly aim'd at by publiſhing theſe Devotions, is to aſſiſt the good Chriſtian in his* private Retirements, *both before and after receiving the Holy Sacrament, and to furniſh him with proper Prayers to* fill up *theſe vacant* Spaces, *which muſt neceſſarily be in every Communion, eſpecially where the Number of Communicants is great; that ſo he may not only come to the Lord's Table with due* Preparation, *but employ every Minute of his Time there to* holy and religious Purpoſes.

There is no one ('tis hop'd) will think a Work of this Kind unneceſſary, *becauſe there are already* extant *ſo many Prayers for the Sacrament; in this* frozen *and* benumm'd *Age, where* the Love of many is waxen cold, *there is need of all the* Endeavours *that can be us'd to* warm *Mens Affections, and to inflame their Minds with* a true Spirit *of Devotion; and ſince there is ſuch a* Variety *in the Judgments and Opinions of Mankind, it can be no Diſſervice to Religion to* multiply *Books of this Nature, ſince the greater the* Choice *is, the more eaſily will every one furniſh himſelf with ſuch Prayers, as he finds moſt* apt *to excite his Devotion.*

May God of his infinite Mercy bleſs *this and all other Endeavours for keeping up, not only the* Form, *but the* Life *and* Power *of Godlineſs; that in our Addreſſes to him, we may not offer the* Sacrifice of Fools, *but pay him the Duty and Homage of* reaſonable Creatures.

FORMS

FORMS of PRAYER

Proper to be Uſed

Before, At, and After

The Receiving of the

Holy Sacrament.

Whoſo eateth my Fleſh, and drinketh my Blood, hath eternal Life, and I will raiſe him up at the laſt Day, St. John 6, 54.

A Prayer to be frequently us'd the Week preceding the Sacrament, and may be properly added to our Devotions the Morning we Receive.

O Almighty God, and Merciful Father, who haſt given thy only Son Jeſus Chriſt to die for us, and didſt inſtitute a Holy Feaſt in Commemoration of that his moſt precious Death, thereby to preſerve in our Minds a conſtant Remembrance of

of his great Love in laying down his Life for our ſakes; I thy unworthy Servant, who am now invited by thy great Goodneſs to be a Gueſt at thy Holy Table, do humbly adore thy Divine Majeſty, acknowledging, that I am not worthy of the daily Bread thou feedeſt me withal, much leſs of that which came down from Heaven, and which thou haſt given to be the Food and Nouriſhment of our Souls.

O Lord, I confeſs my Sins are ſo many and ſo great, that they may juſtly cauſe me to tremble, when I appear before thee; but, O Merciful Father, preſuming upon that wonderful Goodneſs, which thou haſt ſhewn in all Ages to the humble and contrite Sinner, I preſent my ſelf before thee at this time in great Humility, beſeeching thee to admit me to thy Holy Table, that I may taſte and ſee, how gracious the Lord is, and how wonderful in his Doings towards the Sons of Men.

O make my Longings and Deſires after this Divine Food ſome way anſwerable to my great Needs of it; that being truly ſenſible of all the wants of my Soul, I may not ſeek for Relief from the unſatisfying objects of this World; but coming to thy Holy Table with a true Spiritual Hunger and Thirſt, I may there find a full Supply of all thoſe Graces and Bleſſings, which thou ſeeſt me to ſtand in ſo much need of.

And

And to this End, O Lord, fit and prepare my Heart to approach ſo great a Myſtery, by giving me a juſt Abhorrence of my own Unworthineſs, and an unfeigned Repentance of all my Sins; by rooting out of my Heart all ſinful and corrupt Affections, all Prejudice, Hatred, and ill Will; and by implanting in the Room thereof, all thoſe Devout and Pious, thoſe Meek and Charitable, and Humble Diſpoſitions, which become the Worſhippers of the Holy Jeſus; that when I preſume to appear before thee, I may bring with me a Heart rais'd above the Corruptions that are in the World, and full of the ſtrongeſt Deſires and Reſolutions of loving and ſerving thee.

O Lord, ſuffer me not to approach thy Holy Table out of Cuſtom, but from an inward Senſe of my own Wants, and a ſincere Deſire to partake of the Benefits of thy Divine Inſtitutions. Deliver me from all Coldneſs and Formality, and clothe me with that Wedding Garment thou requireſt, that I may not be rejected or condemn'd by thee, but may have my Pardon ſeal'd, my Weakneſſes repair'd, my Corruptions ſubdued, my Faith ſtrengthen'd, my Hopes enlarg'd, my Charity encreas'd, my Zeal inflam'd, and my Soul ſo intirely and inſeparably united unto thee, that nothing may be ever able to diſſolve the Union; but that being begun here in Grace it may hereafter be conſummated in Glory, through the Merits of him that died for me, even

even the Son of thy eternal Love, Jeſus Chriſt the Righteous, to whom with thee, O Father, and the Holy Spirit, be aſcribed, as is moſt due, all Honour, Glory, Power, Thankſgiving and Praiſe, both now and for evermore. *Amen.*

Let a Man examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup, 1 Cor. 11. 28.

A Prayer before Examination, taken for the moſt part out of Biſhop Ken's *Expoſition of the* Church Catechiſm.

O Thou great Searcher of Hearts, who ſeeſt all that Load of Guilt and Impiety, under which I lie; O help me ſo impartially to judge and condemn my ſelf, ſo humbly to repent, and beg Pardon, that I may not be condemn'd, when I ſhall appear at thy Tribunal in the great and terrible Day of the Lord Jeſus.

Give me Grace, O Lord, to ſearch every Secret of my Heart; that I may leave no Sin (if poſſible) unrepented of: Fill my Eyes full of Tears of Love, that with thoſe Tears I may lament all the Indignities I have offer'd to thy Love.

But alas! After the moſt ſtrict Examination we can make, who can number his Iniquities? Who

Who can tell how oft he offendeth? O cleanſe me therefore, I beſeech thee, from all my ſecret and unknown Tranſgreſſions.

If we ſay, that we have no Sin, we deceive our ſelves, and the Truth is not in us. But if we confeſs our Sins, he is faithful and juſt to forgive us our Sins, and to cleanſe us from all Unrighteouſneſs, 1 John 1. 8, 9.

A Confeſſion of Sins to be us'd in the time of Preparation for the Bleſſed Sacrament, and at other times of Humiliation.

O Moſt Great and Glorious Lord God, Juſt and Terrible in thy Judgments to all obſtinate and rebellious Sinners, but of infinite Mercy to ſuch, as truly repent and turn unto thee; look down, I beſeech thee, with the Eyes of thy tendereſt Pity upon me, a vile and ſinful Creature, who, with great Humility of Soul and Body, do now preſent my ſelf before thee, acknowledging, that I am not worthy to lift up my Eyes to the Throne of thy glorious Majeſty. O Lord, my Sins are ſo many, and ſo great, that it is owing to thy infinite Goodneſs and Mercy, that I have now an Opportunity of humbling my ſelf before thee, and begging Mercy for my Soul, which, I confeſs, has greatly ſinned againſt thee.

I acknowledge, O my God, that thou haſt by innumerable Inſtances, manifeſted thy ſelf to be a moſt kind and indulgent Father; but alas! how have I abus'd thy Goodneſs? And what ungrateful Returns have I made for thy exceeding Kindneſs and Mercy? Inſtead of loving and delighting in thee, and paying thee a filial and chearful Obedience, I find in my ſelf many times a great Proneneſs to offend thee, and a great Backwardneſs and Indiſpoſition to do thoſe things, which thou requireſt of me.

O Lord! I do moſt ſorrowfully confeſs and bewail before thee, that there is in my corrupt Heart too great a Deſire after the things of this World; too great a Fondneſs for the Profits and Pleaſures of it; inſomuch, that my Devotion to thee is many times cold and languid, my Prayers are full of Wandrings, Deadneſs, and Diſtractions, and the very beſt of my religious Duties are accompany'd with ſo many Failings and Imperfections, that I have great Cauſe to humble my ſelf before thee.

This is to be varied, or omitted, as every one ſees fit.

'How greatly, O God, have 'I offended thee by Luſt 'and Intemperance, by Peeviſhneſs, Paſſion and Anger, 'by Covetouſneſs and Ambition, by Pride and 'Envy, by Prejudice and Ill-Will towards my 'Neighbour, by murmuring and repining at 'the

'the Dispensations of thy Providence, and by 'an Unwillingness to resign my self to thy Dis-'posal in all Things? How frequently have I 'violated my Baptismal Engagements, by pre-'ferring the Vanities of this wicked World 'before thy Favour, and by suffering my Heart, 'which has been so often dedicated to thy 'Service, to be brought under the Bondage 'and Dominion of Sin and Folly?

Even since my last Approaches to thy Holy Table, O Lord, I have not ceased to add new Sins to all my former. I have —— [*Here may be mentioned Particulars.*]

And what shall I now say unto thee, O thou Preserver of Man! O Lord, I have no Hope but in thy Mercy, and the infinite Merits of my Dear Redeemer; and if thou rejectest me, I am lost and undone for ever. But O thou compassionate Lover of Souls! who knowest whereof we are made, and remembrest, that we are but Dust, turn not thy Face from me, nor cast thy Servant away in Displeasure; let the Intercessions of thy beloved Son prevail in my Behalf, and for the sake of his meritorious Death and Passion, for all that he has done, and all that he has suffered for me, have Mercy upon me; pardon and forgive, I most earnestly and unfeignedly beseech thee, all the Sins and Follies of my Life past, which are more than I can number,

and greater than I am able to bear; and more eſpecially, O my God, lay not to my Charge the Sins that I have committed ſince my laſt Approaches to thy Holy Table. [*Here again may be named Particulars.*] Cleanſe thou me from all my ſecret and unknown Tranſgreſſions, and vouchſafe, O merciful Father, to be reconcil'd unto me, thy humble and repenting Servant, who am ſorry for my Sins, and griev'd, that I have thus offended thee, the kindeſt and the beſt of Beings: O turn from me all thoſe Evils that I have moſt righteouſly deſerv'd, and let me never feel the ſad Effects of that Anger, which my Sins have juſtly rais'd againſt me; but ſpare me, O Lord moſt Holy, O God moſt Mighty; O Holy and Merciful Saviour, thou moſt worthy Judge Eternal, ſuffer not the Bowels of thy tender Compaſſions to be for ever ſhut againſt me: There is nothing, O Lord, ſo terrible as thy Diſpleaſure, nothing ſo dreadful to me, as to ſin againſt thee; (for who can dwell with everlaſting Burnings, or who is able to abide the Fury of thy Wrath?) O let me then ſeriouſly and conſtantly oppoſe and forſake all my beloved Luſts and ſinful Pleaſures, and never more be led away by the deceitful Enticements of the World, the Fleſh or the Devil.

Reform whatever thou ſeeſt amiſs in the Temper and Diſpoſition of my Mind, or any of the Actions of my Life, and grant that for the

the time to come I may live only unto thee, in an awful Fear of thy great Name, and a conſtant Regard to thy bleſſed Will, keeping always a Conſcience void of Offence, both towards thee, and towards all Men.

Give me Grace to ſpend my Time religiouſly, ſoberly, and uſefully, in the ſubduing my Paſſions, mortifying my corrupt Inclinations, and in the Practice of all thoſe Duties thou requireſt of me, that, when thou ſhalt think fit to take me out of this State of Trial and Temptation here, I may be received into that Bleſſed Kingdom, where all Tears ſhall be wip'd from my Eyes, and Sin and Death ſhall be no more. Grant this, O merciful Father, through the Merits and for the Sake of thy Son and my alone Saviour Jeſus Chriſt. *Amen.*

When the wicked Man turneth away from his Wickedneſs, that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he ſhall ſave his Soul alive. Ezek. 18. 27.

A Prayer to be uſed at the ſame time, or ſhortly afterwards.

O Thou moſt Gracious and Merciful Father, who out of great Pity and Compaſſion

to my poor Soul, haſt given me this Opportunity of humbling my ſelf before thee; accept, I earneſtly entreat thee, of my unfeigned Sorrow for all the Sins which I have committed againſt thy Divine Majeſty; I muſt confeſs it bears no Proportion to the Heinouſneſs of my Offences, ſo weak and imperfect is it, that my Repentance it ſelf needs to be repented of. O do thou in much Mercy look upon me, and let the infinite Mercies of my dear Redeemer ſupply all my Defects; and diſdain not, I beſeech thee, for his dear Sake, to be reconcil'd unto me, and to admit me into thy Favour, without which I am of all Creatures the moſt miſerable.

O Lord, there is nothing that I deſire ſo much, as to be delivered from the Power and Dominion of my Sins, and to be at perfect Peace with thee; and therefore I humbly beg leave at this time to renew the Vows and Reſolutions I have often made, of loving and obeying thee; for which End I offer unto thy Divine Majeſty my Soul and Body, and all that is mine, humbly beſeeching thee to take them into thy Cuſtody, that being in Safety under thy Protection, they may be for ever devoted to thee, and thy Service.

It is not, O Lord, with any Confidence in my own Strength, that I preſume to give up my ſelf to thy Obedience, (for alas! I am ſenſible

ſible that my Heart is very falſe, and too eaſily drawn away by the deceitful Tempter) but all my Hopes, and all my Dependance is in thy Almighty Power and Goodneſs, and to that I humbly fly for Help againſt that cruel Enemy of my Soul, who is daily lying in wait to deſtroy me: I know thy Grace is ſufficient for me, and therefore in thee do I put my Truſt; for thou art my Hope and my Confidence, my Saviour and mighty Deliverer; O never leave me then to my ſelf, nor to the Weakneſs of my own corrupt Nature; but let thy Holy Spirit be always preſent with me, to defend me in all my Conflicts, to ſupport me under all my Weakneſſes and Infirmities, to inſtruct me in all difficult Caſes, and to guide me into thoſe Paths, that lead to everlaſting Life; and grant, O merciful Father, that I may never grieve thy Holy Spirit, nor fall into thoſe Sins and Impurities, which will cauſe him to leave and forſake me, and to abandon me to my own fooliſh and perverſe Will; but give me Grace in all things to follow his Guidance and Direction, and to devote my ſelf entirely to a Life of Virtue and Religion, that denying all Ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts, I may live righteouſly, ſoberly, and godly in this preſent World, and having ſerv'd thee faithfully in this Life, I may at laſt obtain an eternal Inheritance in thoſe bleſſed Regions of everlaſting Reſt and Peace, which thou haſt reſerv'd for them that truly love

and

and fear thee, through the Merits of thy beloved Son Jesus Christ the Righteous. *Amen.*

To do Good, and to Distribute, forget not, for with such Sacrifices God is well pleased. Heb. 13. 16.

After giving of Alms.

O Blessed God, who didst accept the poor Widow's Mite, vouchsafe, I beseech thee, to accept this small Matter that I have now given towards the Relief of thy poor distressed Servants; I humbly offer it, as a Tribute and Acknowledgment, that all I have is from thee, and owing to thy great Bounty and Goodness: O pardon my vain and sinful Expences, and make me a faithful and wise Steward of all those Talents thou art pleas'd to entrust me with, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

This do in Remembrance of me, St. Luke 22. 19. *For as often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do shew the Lord's Death, till he come,* 1 Cor. 11. 26.

Prayers to be used after Sermon is ended, and whilst others are Communicating

I.

O Blessed Lord God, who hast ordained this holy Feast for a solemn Commemoration of

of the infinite Love and Kindneſs of our moſt Gracious Lord and Maſter Jeſus Chriſt, in condeſcending to take our Nature upon him, and to ſuffer Death upon the Croſs for us miſerable Sinners, and haſt commanded us in his moſt Holy Goſpel to *do this in Remembrance of him*; I thy unworthy Servant, in Obedience to that Command, and in Confidence of thy unſpeakable Goodneſs, do now approach thy Holy Table, acknowledging my ſelf unworthy ſo much as to take up the Crumbs that fall from thence, much leſs to partake of this Feaſt, which thou haſt prepared for thy faithful and obedient Servants; but, O merciful Father, who haſt Compaſſion upon all Men, and hateſt nothing that thou haſt made, pardon, I moſt humbly beſeech thee, for thy dear Son's Sake, all thoſe Sins that have made me thus unworthy, and let thy infinite Goodneſs and Mercy ſupply all my Defects, and make up what is wanting to fit my Soul for a devout and worthy receiving of this Bleſſed Sacrament.

Drive away from me, I beſeech thee, all thoſe vain and worldly Thoughts, that are ſo apt to diſtract my Mind, and render it unfit for Holy and Religious Duties; and fill me with thoſe devout and pious Diſpoſitions, which become thy Preſence, and thoſe that attend upon thee.

Give

Give me ſuch a lively Sight and Senſe of my Sins and Unworthineſs, that I may heartily bewail my Tranſgreſſions; and ſuch Meaſures of thy Grace, as may enable me to forſake them.

Grant that the Remembrance of my dying Saviour, and of the infinite Mercy he has ſhewn to loſt Mankind, in laying down his Life for our ſakes, may poſſeſs my Soul with an unfeigned Love and Thankfulneſs to thee, and Charity to my Neighbour, that I may worthily commemorate the great Love of my Saviour in thus dying for us, and thereby be made Partaker of all thoſe Benefits he has purchaſed for us, thro' his Merits and Mediation. *Amen.*

II.

O Father of Mercies, and God of all Love! Who art always more ready to hear, than we to pray; diſdain not, I beſeech thee, to accept the Prayers, which I now offer to thy Divine Majeſty, in the Name and through the Mediation of thy beloved Son. Turn not thy Face from me, nor caſt thy Servant away in Diſpleaſure; and though I am unworthy the Name of a Child, yet be thou ſtill my Father Merciful and Gracious, and ſhut not up the Bowels of thy tender Compaſſions towards me. Let the Interceſſions of thy beloved Son, in whom thou art always well pleaſed, prevail in my

my behalf, and for his Sake be thou reconcil'd unto me, and receive me to thy Favour, which I earneſtly long for, and more paſſionately deſire than all this World is able to give me.

O Lord, I confeſs, that I have gone aſtray like a Sheep that is loſt, and it is owing to thy infinite Goodneſs and Mercy, that I have now an Opportunity of bewailing the Follies of my paſt Life, and pleading before thee the Merits and Death of thy dear Son; O let thy Pity and Compaſſion be ſtill extended to thy poor Servant, who is weary and heavy laden with the Burthen of his Sins, and ready to ſink under a Load of Human Infirmities: Stretch forth the Right Hand of thy Majeſty, and ſupport me for thy Mercies ſake; reſcue me out of the Power of my corrupt Affections, and ſay unto my Soul, I am thy Salvation.

To thee, O Lord, I fly for Refuge, O deny me not thy Succour; to thee I lay open all my Wants, for thou art the great Phyſician of our Souls; O do thou vouchſafe to pity the Weakneſſes and cure the Infirmities of my diſeaſed Soul. I come unto thee, O Lord, who art the Fountain of all Mercy, beſeeching thee to waſh away all my Uncleanneſs in the Blood of the bleſſed Jeſus, and to cleanſe me from all Filthineſs both of Fleſh and Spirit; I come as a returning Prodigal Child to his tender and compaſ-

paſſionate Father; O receive me and revive me by thy Favour, and do thou, who art the Source of Eternal Brightneſs, enlighten my dark Mind, that I may ſee the Things, that make for my Peace: I acknowledge, O Lord, that I am a poor frail Creature, but in Confidence of thy infinite Love to the Sons of Men, I come unto thee who art the great Lord of Heaven and Earth, beſeeching thee to ſupply all my Wants, and to do more abundantly for me, than I am able to ask or think.

Grant, O Gracious Father, that by partaking of theſe outward and viſible Signs, the Symbols of the Body and Blood of thy dear Son, I may receive that inward and ſpiritual Grace, which will enable me to triumph over the World, the Fleſh and the Devil.

Root out of my Heart, whatever is offenſive to thy pure Eyes; and endue me with all thoſe heavenly Virtues, which are pleaſing in thy Sight, and which thou wilt eternally reward, for the Merits and Sake of my Bleſſed Saviour and Redeemer, Jeſus Chriſt. *Amen.*

III.

O Bleſſed Lord God; thou moſt tender and compaſſionate Lover of Souls! What Returns of Praiſe and Thankſgiving ſhall I make thee for that amazing Inſtance of thy Good-

Goodneſs, in ſending thy only Son into the World to die for the Redemption of Mankind? Who, O Lord, is able to comprehend the Length and Breadth, the Height and Depth of that Love of thine, which paſſes all Knowledge, and all Underſtanding? Nothing but infinite Wiſdom can fathom the Depth of ſo great a Myſtery: O do thou vouchſafe to diſcover ſo much of it to thy Servant, as may cauſe me to admire and adore thy Goodneſs, and to bleſs thy Name for evermore; that my Mouth beingfilled with thy Praiſe, and my Heart with thy Love, I may daily endeavour to walk worthy of thoſe great Things thou haſt done for me, by a ready and chearful Obedience to all thy Commands, particularly this, of commemorating the Death and Paſſion of my dying Saviour.

But, O merciful Father, how ſhall ſuch a vile Wretch as I am, dare to approach thy holy Table? How ſhall I preſume to celebrate the Memorial of thy great Love to Mankind, who ſo often provoke thy Divine Majeſty, and am ſo apt to tranſgreſs thy juſt and righteous Laws, whereby I have made my ſelf unworthy ſo much as to make mention of thy Holy Name: O Lord, though I am a Sinner, yet I am ſtill the Purchaſe of thy Son's Blood; O then do not deſpiſe me, do not reject me, but receive me graciouſly to thy Mercy for his Merits ſake; let the precious Blood of that immaculate Lamb ſpeak on my behalf, and powerfully interceed

with thee for Pity to my Soul; wash me in that Fountain which thou hast opened for Sin and Uncleanness, and purify my polluted Heart from all those vicious Affections, that are so hateful in thy Sight. And, O let me never forsake thee, the Fountain of living Waters, to pursue the vain and empty Enjoyments of this World; but give me such a Sense of the great Importance of a holy Life, that I may seriously and devoutly give up my self to thee and thy Service: Let the Remembrance of a Crucified Saviour be always present to my Mind, and be a never failing Argument to secure me against the Corruptions that are in the World; that as Christ died for me, and rose again; so I may die to Sin, and rise again to Newness of Life: And grant, O merciful Father, that by the Participation of these Divine Mysteries I may receive such new Supplies of thy Grace, as may enable me to walk before thee in Holiness and Righteousness all the Days of my Life, through the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

IV.

BLessed Jesus! I am now approaching to thy Holy Table; O let me once more entreat thee to work in me whatsoever is wanting to fit me for thy Divine Acceptance, and a worthy Receiving. Give me Repentance unto Life, not to be repented of; endue me with a lively

lively Faith, a perfect Love, and an universal Charity, that thou pitying my Weakneſſes, and forgiving my Infirmities, I may worthily receive theſe Elements of Bread and Wine, to my Support and Comfort in this Life, and my Eternal Happineſs in that which is to come. Grant this, O merciful Saviour, for thy own dear Merits Sake. *Amen.*

Let us draw near with a true Heart, in full Aſſurance of Faith, having our Hearts ſprinkled from an evil Conſcience, and our Bodies waſhed with pure Water. Heb. 10. 22.

At the Table.

O Gracious God, whoſe Pity and Compaſſion exceeds the Kindneſſes of the moſt tender Father, look upon thy Servant, who, encourag'd by thy Goodneſs, have here preſum'd to caſt my ſelf down before thee. O let thoſe Arms that were once ſtretch'd upon the Croſs, be now open to receive me to thy Mercy. I am vile and ſinful, but whither ſhall a Sinner under a Load of Guilt and Miſery fly, but unto thee the Fountain of all Goodneſs! Let thy merciful Ears, O God, be then open to my Prayers, and ſpare me, O Lord moſt Holy, O God moſt Mighty, O Holy and Merciful Saviour, thou moſt worthy Judge Eternal, ſuffer not thy Anger to riſe againſt me, nor caſt thy

Servant away in Diſpleaſure; but feed my hungry Soul with this Divine Food, that being filled with thy Grace, it may never more become the Seat of Vanity and Folly, but the conſtant Reſidence and Abode of thy eternal and ever-bleſſed Spirit. *Amen.*

Come, Lord Jeſus, and take Poſſeſſion of me, and let every thing that is hateful in thy ſight, fly away from thy Preſence. Be thou the only Object of my Love, the only ſpring of my Deſires, the conſtant Food and Nouriſhment of my Soul in this Life, and its eternal Reward and Happineſs in that which is to come.

After the Bread.

O Thou who vouchſafeſt to be our Food, nouriſh my Soul to Life Eternal.

Let me feed on thee by a true and lively Faith, and give me ſuch a Reliſh of this Divine Food, that I may never more be delighted with the vain and ſinful Pleaſures of this World.

Biſhop Kenn. O merciful Jeſu! Create in me a mighty Hunger after this Bread of Life, this Bread which came down from Heaven, and let this Divine Food inſtil into my weak and languiſhing Soul new Supplies

plies of Grace, new Life, new Love, new Vigour, and new Resolutions, that I may never again faint, or tire in my Duty.

Before the Cup.

GRant, O merciful God, that this Cup, which I am now about to receive, may be filled with thy Mercy, and be unto me the Cup of Eternal Blessing. O let me never drink of the Dregs of thy Wrath, nor pour upon me the Vials of thy severe Displeasure; but sprinkle me with the Blood of the ever-blessed Jesus, that my Soul being cleansed from all its Corruptions, it may be ever precious in thy sight, O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer.

After both.

BLessed be the Name of the Lord: Blessing, and Honour, and Glory, and Thanksgiving, and Praise, be unto him that sitteth on the Throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever.

Lord, I have done as thou hast commanded me, O let me find the great Benefits of this thy Divine Institution; pour down thy Graces upon me; direct my Goings in thy Ways, and enable me by the Power and Strength of this Divine Food, to persevere in the Practice of a

Holy and Religious Life, even to the laſt Moment of my Days. *Amen.*

Praiſe the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me, praiſe his Holy Name. Pſal. 103. 1.

Praiſe the Lord, O my Soul, and forget not all his Benefits. Verſe 2.

Who forgiveth all thy Sin, and healeth all thy Infirmities. Verſe 3.

A Thankſgiving afterwards.

O Merciful and Gracious God, whoſe Goodneſs is unſpeakable, and whoſe Mercies know no End; accept, I humbly pray thee, of my unfeigned Thanks, which I now offer to thy Divine Majeſty, in return for all the Benefits which thou haſt been pleaſed to beſtow upon me and all Mankind; but more eſpecially for that amazing Inſtance of thy Love, in the Redemption of the World by the precious Blood of thy dear Son; for inſtituting this Holy Sacrament, to the End we might always remember the exceeding Love of our Saviour in thus dying for us, and for admitting me, who am a weak and ſinful Creature, to be a Gueſt at thy Holy Table, and thereby a Partaker of ſuch great and mighty Benefits.

Lord,

Lord, what is Man, that thou art thus mindful of him! Or what am I, that thou ſhouldſt ſo regard me! Great is thy Name, O God, and great is thy Mercy, thy Goodneſs is without End: O let the Conſideration of theſe thy Mercies ſink deep into my Heart, and raiſe in my Mind ſuch a ſincere Love to thee, and ſuch a hearty Zeal to thy Service, that I may not be Barren or Unfruitful under ſo great Means of Grace, but that my Returns of Duty and Obedience may (ſo far as is poſſible) bear ſome Proportion to thoſe great Things thou haſt done for me.

To that End, O Lord, repleniſh my Soul with all thoſe Graces which thou ſeeſt to be wanting in me. Subdue in my rebellious and corrupt Nature every proud, angry and uncharitable Thought, every inordinate Love and Affection, and whatever elſe exalts it ſelf againſt thy bleſſed Will; and grant that I may walk before thee in all Meekneſs and Humility, in Patience and Contentedneſs, in a perfect Submiſſion to thy bleſſed Will, and in the Practice of all thoſe Holy and Religious Duties, which become thy Servants, and thoſe that profeſs thy Holy Name.

O Lord! It is the earneſt and ſincere Deſire of my Soul to be conformable to thy Laws, and to obtain thy Favour and Love, which is dearer to me than all the Happineſs of this

World;

World; but alas! I am a weak and frail Creature, and my own Experience ſadly teaches me, that, without thy reſtraining Grace, every the leaſt Temptation will be able to baffle my ſtrongeſt Reſolutions: But, O God, in thee is my Truſt; O let me not be confounded: Be thou my Help in time of Need, my Saviour and mighty Deliverer; let thy Grace and Holy Spirit be always preſent with me, to guide and direct me, to ſtrengthen and aſſiſt me, that I may not be beguil'd by the Deceitfulneſs of Sin, or betray'd by my own treacherous Heart; but fighting manfully under thy Banner againſt the World, the Fleſh, and the Devil, I may at laſt obtain that Crown of Righteouſneſs, which thou haſt promis'd to them that perſevere unto the End. Grant this, O moſt merciful Father, for the Merits and Sake of thy Son, and our alone Saviour Jeſus Chriſt. *Amen.*

I exhort therefore, that firſt all Supplications, Prayers, Interceſſions, and giving of Thanks, be made for all Men.

For Kings, and for all that are in Authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable Life in all Godlineſs and Honeſty.

For this is good and acceptable in the Sight of God our Saviour, 1 Tim. Verſ. 1, 2, 3.

Here

Here may be properly us'd this Prayer of Interceſſion, when there is time for it.

O Almighty and moſt merciful God, who in thy Holy Goſpel haſt commanded us to make Prayers and Interceſſions for all Men; I thy unworthy Servant, in Obedience to that Command, do humbly beſeech thy Divine Majeſty, to extend thy Pity and Compaſſion to the whole Race of Mankind. Give thy enlightning Grace to thoſe that are in Darkneſs, and thy converting Grace to thoſe that are in Sin; and grant that all ſuch as have erred and are deceived, may be brought into the Way of Truth and Holineſs, that ſo their Souls may be ſaved in the great Day of the Lord Jeſus.

More particularly, O Lord, be merciful to theſe Nations to which I belong; pardon our great and crying Sins, and avert from us thoſe Evils, that we have moſt juſtly deſerved; put a ſtop to that Prophaneneſs and Irreligion, that Pride and Vanity, that Bitterneſs and Uncharitableneſs which ſo abounds; and let Truth, and Righteouſneſs, and Peace flouriſh and prevail among us; that we turning from our evil Ways unto thee, the Lord our God, thou may'ſt turn from thy Diſpleaſure againſt us, and delight over us, to do us good, to build us up, and not to deſtroy us.

Be

Be gracious to thy holy Catholick Church, eſpecially that Part of it which thou haſt planted in theſe Kingdoms; heal the Breaches, and compoſe the unhappy Differences, that have ſo miſerably rent and divided it, and grant that all that profeſs the Religion of thy dear Son, may live like Brethren, in the Unity of the Spirit, and in the ſtricteſt Bonds of Charity and Peace.

O Lord, bleſs the Paſtors and Governors of thy Church; give Succeſs to all their Labours and Endeavours for the good of Souls; and grant that by the Innocency of their Lives, and the Soundneſs of their Doctrine, they may promote thy Honour and Glory, and ſet forward the Salvation of all Men.

Bleſs our ſovereign Lord the King; protect his Perſon, proſper his Government, direct his Counſels, give Succeſs to his Arms, and make him an Inſtrument in thy Hands of great good to theſe Kingdoms.

Let the Mournings, O Lord, of ſuch as are in Affliction, aſcend unto thy Throne, and give them ſuch Help and Comfort as thou ſeeſt beſt for them; and however thou thinkeſt fit to deal with them in this World, yet, O gracious Father, let them not fail of everlaſting Comfort in that which is to come.

Let

Let a double Portion of thy Bleſſings, O God, deſcend upon my dear Wife; give us Grace to diſcharge the Duties of our reſpective Relations, and grant that we may live together lovingly and kindly, holy and religiouſly, and in thy Fear and Favour all our Days.

This is to be varied, or omitted as it ſuits every ones Condition.

Bleſs theſe dear Children thou haſt given us, and aſſiſt us by thy good Spirit, to bring them up in the Fear of thee our God; defend them, O Lord, from the Evils and Temptations of this World, and grant, that as they grow in Years, they may increaſe in Grace, and in thy Favour, and be Comforts to us all our Days.

Let every one of my Friends and Relations, O God, be of the Number of thoſe whom thou loveſt and delighteſt in; give them whatever thou ſeeſt needful both for their Souls and Bodies, and after a ſafe and happy Paſſage thro' this Life, grant them everlaſting Reſt and Peace in thy eternal Kingdom.

And, O Lord, if there are any that have done me wrong, or which hate me without a Cauſe, give them Repentance, and better Minds, and never impute to them any Injuries which I have received at their Hands: And endue me, I beſeech thee, with ſuch a meek and patient Diſpoſition, that no Provocations whatſoever may

at

at any time transport me into an angry or revengeful Temper.

Hear, O Lord, I beseech thee, the Intercessions of me thy unworthy Servant, and let them find Favour and Acceptance with thee, through the Merits and for the sake of thy Son, and my alone Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

This Intercession may be properly us'd at any other time, and particularly in the time of Preparation for the Sacrament.

A Concluding Prayer.

BLessed be thy Name, O Lord, for the Opportunity thou hast now vouchsafed me, of commemorating the Death and Passion of thy dear Son. Pardon, I most humbly beseech thee, the Deadness of my Heart at this time, the Wandrings of my Prayers, and the Coldness of my Devotion. O let thy Mercy and Goodness supply what is wanting in me; and be thou graciously pleas'd to pity my Weaknesses, and forgive my Infirmities, through the Merits, and for the sake of thy beloved Son Jesus Christ the Righteous, to whom with thee, O Father, and the Holy Ghost, be all Honour and Glory ascribed now and for ever more *Amen.*

I have

I have ſworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous Judgments. Pſal. 119. 196.

A Prayer to be uſed at our Return Home.

O Lord, my God! I deſire with all Thankfulneſs of Heart again to bleſs and praiſe thy Holy Name, for thy merciful Goodneſs this Day vouchſafed me, in admitting me, who am but ſinful Duſt and Aſhes, to approach thy Holy Table, and for that Pity and Compaſſion thou haſt ſhewn to my diſeaſed Soul, in ſtrengthening and refreſhing it with the precious Body and Blood of thy dear Son. O that I could make Returns unto thee again ſuitable in ſome meaſure to that exceeding Kindneſs I have received from thee! That I might never more offend thee, never more be drawn away by the Snares and Temptations of this deceitful World! But, O Lord, I am not able of my ſelf to do the leaſt thing that is good; O be thou graciouſly pleas'd to manifeſt thy Strength in my Weakneſs, and grant, that by the Grace and Aſſiſtance of thy holy Spirit I may live as becomes the Redeemed of the Lord, and in all things demean my ſelf in ſuch a manner as thou wouldſt have me.

Let the healing and refreſhing Virtues of that bleſſed Sacrament, which I have this Day been

a Partaker of, renew all the Decays of my corrupt Nature, and cure those many Wounds and Diseases that Sin has made in my poor Soul. O let not those unruly Lusts and Passions that have so often tyranniz'd over me, be suffer'd to reign in me; but endue me, O Lord, with a truly Christian Spirit; with Meekness and Humility; with Patience and Charity, and with all those Graces and heavenly Dispositions, that thou loveſt and delighteſt in; that as I am devoted to the Service of Jesus Christ, so I may daily endeavour more and more to please him; by imitating his Example, delighting in his Laws, promoting his Honour, and doing every thing that becomes the Servant of so kind and gracious a Master.

Bless, O Lord, I beseech thee, all thy sacred Institutions for my Encrease in Righteousness and true Holiness, that I may daily grow in Grace, and be continually improving under all the Methods of thy Love; that so a good Conscience being my greatest Care, and Religion my chief Delight, I may live in thy Favour, and die in thy Peace, and at last through thy Mercy be found meet to be a Partaker of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.

Hear me, O most Merciful Father, through the Mediation, and for the sake of thy beloved Son Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen.*

Our Father, &c.

Whoso

Whoſo offereth me Thanks, and Praiſe, he honoureth me. Pſal. 50. 23.

O Praiſe the Lord, for it is a good thing to ſing Praiſes unto our God, yea, a joyful and pleaſant thing it is to be thankful. Pſal. 147. 1.

A General Thankſgiving proper to be uſed upon the Lord's Day in our Evening Retirements, eſpecially upon Communion Days.

O Moſt glorious and eternal Lord God, thou art the great Creator of Heaven and Earth, and the Source and Fountain of all Good; look graciouſly upon thy Servant, who am come into thy Preſence, to offer up the humble Tribute of my unfeigned Praiſes to thy Divine Majeſty, from a Heart truly mov'd with a ſenſe of thy infinite and unſpeakable Goodneſs.

I bleſs thee, O Lord, for creating me at firſt out of nothing, for cauſing me to be born of Chriſtian Parents, and for admitting me by holy Baptiſm into the Communion of thy Church; for all the Helps and Aſſiſtances of thy Grace, which I have ſince had to enable me in any Meaſure to perform the Engagments that were then made on my Behalf; for implanting in my Mind an early Fear of offending thee, and a great Deſire of pleaſing thee; for whatever Sin I have any time eſcaped, and what-

ever Good I have done through the whole Courſe of my Life.

I bleſs thee, O Lord, for all thy Patience and Forbearance towards me, for ſparing me ſo long, and giving me ſo large a ſpace for Repentance; for all the Motions of thy good Spirit, and the Checks and Reſtraints of my own Conſcience; for the many Opportunities thou haſt given me of ſerving thee, and calling upon thy Name, *particularly, O Lord, for thoſe of this Day*, and for all other the Means of Grace, and for the Hopes of Glory; but above all, I magnify, I bleſs, I adore thy great and glorious Name, for ſending thy Son into the World to die for the Redemption of me and all Mankind.

I bleſs thee likewiſe, O Lord, for all the temporal Mercies which I have receiv'd from thy moſt bountiful Hand; for that Meaſure of Health I have enjoyed, for the many Friends and Relations thou haſt given me, for delivering me from the great Calamities I have juſtly deſerv'd, and with which many of thy beſt and deareſt Servants have been viſited: 'Tis to thy Goodneſs I muſt aſcribe it, that I have the Uſe of my Senſes, and of my Reaſon, that I am not languiſhing upon a Bed of Sickneſs, nor groaning under the ſharpeſt Pains, that I am not pining with Want, nor forc'd to beg my daily Bread, but am competently provided for, and

ſee

see *my* * *dear Wife and Children*, and many other Comforts round about me: 'Tis from thee alone, O Lord, my Affairs do in any Measure prosper, or any the least of my Undertakings succeed; 'tis thy Wisdom that directs me, thy Truth that instructs me, and thy Power that at all times preserves me: And more particularly, O Lord, I desire to bless and praise thy holy Name for *(here may be mention'd any other particular Mercies or Deliverances.)*

* *This is to be varied according to every Person's Condition.*

And now, O Lord, what Returns shall a poor Sinner make for all these marvellous Instances of thy Mercy and loving Kindness? Shall my Tongue be daily sounding forth thy Praises? Alas! what will that avail me, unless I manifest the Sincerity of those Praises by a holy Life and Conversation! O give me Grace then, I most humbly beseech thee, to shew forth the Sense I have of thy Love, not with my Lips only, but in my Life, by walking before thee in all Godliness and Honesty, by serving thee faithfully, and making a right Use of all those Blessings thou bestowest on me, by studying to please thee in all things, and doing every thing that becomes the Servant of so kind and bountiful a Master.

O let me never behave my self in so ungrateful a manner, as to provoke thee to withdraw

thy Mercies from me; but give me ſuch a lively Senſe of thy loving Kindneſs towards me, as may excite my Thankfulneſs, and engage me to pay a willing and chearful Obedience to thy Commandments; that devoting my ſelf entirely to thy Service, I may daily grow in Grace, and be continually advancing to new Degrees of thy Favour, that ſo theſe Bleſſings here may be an Earneſt of thy future Mercies, which I beſeech thee to grant me for the ſake of thy beloved Son Jeſus Chriſt our Lord; to whom with thee, O Father, and the Holy Ghoſt, be aſcribed, as is moſt due, all Honour, Glory, Power, Thankſgiving, and Praiſe, both now and for evermore. *Amen.*

To him that overcometh will I grant to ſit with me in my Throne, even as I alſo overcame, and am ſet down with my Father in his Throne, Rev. 3. 21.

A Prayer for God's Grace to perſevere in a Chriſtian Courſe of Life.

O Moſt gracious and bleſſed Lord God! thou art the Author and Finiſher of every good Work; without thee nothing is ſtrong, nothing is holy; without thy aſſiſting and preventing Grace we are but as Duſt before the Wind, carried to and fro, and eaſily driven away by every ſlight Temptation.

O Lord, I am thy Servant, dedicated unto thee long ago by holy Baptiſm, and devoted to thy Obedience by thoſe ſolemn Engagements, which were then made on my behalf, and which I have ſince (*often*) renewed at thy holy Table, from a ſerious Senſe and Conviction, that thy Service is the moſt perfect Freedom, and that without thy Favour and Love I am of all Creatures the moſt miſerable.

O my God! I am fully perſwaded, that it is my Happineſs and Privilege, as well as my Duty, to love, adore, and ſerve thee; I am ſeriouſly convinc'd, that there is no Pleaſure like that of a good Conſcience, and that the greateſt ſatisfactions in this World are not worthy to be compared with that Fulneſs of Joy, which is in thy Preſence for evermore: But alas! I am ſenſible that I carry about with me a wretched and corrupt Nature; I find a Law in my Members warring againſt the Law in my Mind; and know by ſad Experience, that I am prone to offend thee, and too apt to forget the Vows and Reſolutions, which I have made to ſerve and obey thee.

I beſeech thee therefore, O moſt merciful Father, who knoweſt whereof we are made, and remembreſt, that we are but Duſt, that thou wouldſt be pleaſed of thy great Goodneſs to pity the Weakneſs of thy poor Creature, and to vouchſafe me the Aſſiſtance of thy Grace

and

and Holy Spirit, that I may not be tempted above what I am able to bear, but through thy Almighty Power may be enabled to perſevere in my Chriſtian Warfare, and ſucceſsfully to encounter thoſe Enemies of my Soul; the World, the Fleſh, and the Devil.

O let me never faint, or tire in my Duty, nor for the ſake of any thing, this World can offer me, be unmindful of the great and important Affair of my Salvation. Give me ſuch a Zeal for thy Service, that the doing thy Will may be my greateſt Joy and Satisfaction, and imprint on my Mind ſuch a lively Senſe of thy Love, as may inflame my Heart with the moſt devout and ardent Affections; that being every Day more and more wean'd from the World, I may look upon all its Honours, Pleaſures, and Profits with that Coldneſs and Indifferency, which becomes the Servant of the bleſſed Jeſus.

Root out of my Heart, O God, by the powerful Efficacy of thy Grace, all Pride, and Envy, and Covetouſneſs; all Bitterneſs, Anger, and Malice, and whatever elſe is contrary to the Laws and Precepts of the Goſpel; and ſow in my Mind the Seeds of true Religion and Goodneſs, that I may become fruitful in every good Word and Work, and that my whole Life may be one continued Act of an humble and dutiful Obedience to thy Divine Commandments.

O Lord!

O Lord! ſtrengthen my Faith, fortify my Mind, and give me ſuch an honeſt and upright Heart, that nothing may be ever able to ſhake my Integrity; but notwithſtanding all the Allurements and Temptations of this World, I may continue ſteadfaſt and unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord; that being faithful unto Death, I may at laſt obtain that Crown of Righteouſneſs, which thou haſt promis'd to them, who by patient Continuance in well-doing ſeek for Glory, and Honour, and Immortality, through the Merits, and for the ſake of thy bleſſed Son Jeſus Chriſt, our Lord. *Amen.*

God is our Hope and Strength, a preſent Help in Trouble, Pſal. 46. 1.

A Prayer to be uſed in Time of Temptation.

O God, our Refuge and Strength, who art a preſent Help in Time of Trouble! I fly unto thee for Succour againſt the Face of my Enemy, who has now lift up his Hand againſt me; his Strength is mighty, and his Malice great, and I alas! weak and unable to withſtand his Aſſaults; but O thou who art greater than all things, ſend down thy Help from above, and reſcue me out of the Jaws of the devouring Lion; ſave me, and deliver me from the Temptations I am now under, which are

too

too mighty for me, and unleſs thou helpeſt me, will certainly prevail againſt me: In thee, O Lord, have I put my Truſt, O let me never be brought to Confuſion; but hide me under the Shadow of thy Wings, until this Tyranny be over-paſt; and however thou may'ſt think fit to make Trial of my Love and Obedience, yet ſuffer me not, I beſeech thee, to be tempted above what I am able to bear, but make me a Way to eſcape, that I may not ſin againſt thee; for nothing, O Lord, is ſo terrible as thy Diſpleaſure, nothing ſo grievous to me, as to ſin againſt thee: O leave me not then, I humbly entreat thee, to my ſelf, nor to the Weakneſs of my own corrupt Nature; I have no ſtrength of my own, but all my Hopes, and all my Dependance is in thy Almighty Power and Goodneſs; Thou art the Rock of Ages, and the Help of all that put their Truſt in thee; I know thy Grace is ſufficient for me; O deny it not then to thy Servant, who now needs it, and moſt earneſtly deſires it; and though I am not worthy of the leaſt of all thy Mercies, yet, O merciful Father, who pitieſt the Weakneſſes and Infirmities of thy Children, have Compaſſion on me, and help me, that I may not be vanquiſh'd in this Time of Trial and Temptation.

To this End, O Lord, make me ſeriouſly to conſider the great Folly and Danger of Sin; that all its Pleaſures are ſhort and momentary,

but

but its Punishment endless and intolerable; that no Satisfactions can compare with the Joys of a good Conscience, or any Trouble with that of a wounded Spirit; and grant that I may be so fully persuaded of these great and important Truths, that I may turn away my Ears from the deceitful Tempter, and resolve to have no Fellowship with the unfruitful Works of Darkness: And Oh! let the mighty Power of thy Grace animate my Courage, and strengthen my Faith, that so nothing may stop me in my Christian Warfare; but that fighting manfully under Christ's Banner, who is the great Captain of our Salvation, I may at last triumph with him in his eternal Kingdom, where there shall be no more Conflict with Sin, but I shall love and praise thee throughout all Ages. *Amen.*

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